



What is KEFIR? (Pronounced Kêh-feer')

Note: *The following information is true about homemade Kefir. Commercially sold Kefir is another story.*

Kefir's Superior Therapeutic Nutrition

Homemade Kefir is about the best probiotic existing because it is a living beneficial bacteria. Moreover, Kefir contains minerals and essential amino acids that help your body with its natural healing powers and maintenance functions. Kefir contains 42 different strains of friendly bacteria. The complete proteins in liquid Kefir are partially digested and therefore more easily utilized by the body. Kefir has an abundance of vitamins, minerals, amino acids and enzymes. Some of the more prominent of these are calcium, phosphorus, magnesium, vitamin K, A, C and D. According to Vivian Goldschmidt, M.A., Kefir is a potent source of calcium (approx. 300 mg. per cup) that your body can absorb because unsweetened cultured Kefir is acid neutral which is not true of pasteurized milk, as the pasteurization process turns the alkaline raw milk to highly acidic. Acidic milk uses up calcium in the body to break it down into something it can digest. Kefir is great for pregnant and nursing mothers; and for babies to ease intestinal upsets.

Why Kefir is better than yogurt:

"The reason Kefir is superior to yogurt", explains writer Giselle Parker, "is because Kefir has tons more beneficial bacteria in it. While 500 ml of yogurt contains close to 1.5 trillion organisms, the same amount of Kefir contains a mind-numbing 5 trillion beneficial and friendly bacteria. What this simply means is, a whole lot more friendly bacteria doing lots of good little things to your body that yogurt can't do."

The kefir made from live kefir pearls is lactose free. This is because the live kefir pearls eat the lactose found in milk and that is how they survive and multiply. The cultures that produce yogurt do not diminish lactose.

Kefir made from live kefir pearls or grains has another great advantage over commercial yogurt. It contains many more strains of friendly bacteria and good yeast which are "residential" in nature, rather than "transient". Residential bacteria will actually "take up residence" on the wall of the intestines. In kefir, these residential strains are thought to "crowd out" pathogenic bacterial or yeast strains (such as candida albicans) that may have taken up residence on the walls of the intestines (where much of our nutrient absorption occurs).

While yogurt contains some health promoting bacterial strains, these are transient in nature (they're "just passing through"). While in the G.I. tract these transient strains do help digestion and absorption. Unfortunately, they don't seem especially adept at lingering in the intestines for an extended period of time, or at "setting up shop" on the walls of the intestine, thereby promoting a more permanent state of health through beneficial intestinal flora.

Tryptophan: One of the essential amino acids abundant in Kefir, tryptophan is well-known for its relaxing effect on the nervous system. Because it also offers loads

of calcium and magnesium -- both of which are critical for a healthy nervous system -- Kefir in the diet can have a particularly calming effect on the nerves.

Rich in the B Vitamins: Kefir is an excellent source of Vitamin B₇ (biotin), which aids the body's absorption of other B vitamins, B₁ (Thiamine), B₂ (riboflavin) B₃ (niacin), B₆ (Pyridoxal phosphate), B₉ (folic acid), and B₁₂ (cobalamin). The many advantages of maintaining adequate B vitamin intake range from regulation of the normal function of the kidneys, liver and central nervous system to helping promote **healthy looking skin and hair, boosting energy and promoting longevity**. It is known that people who experience depression are usually low in their B vitamins.

Kefir may also alleviate anxiety. Studies have shown that those put on a Kefir diet have consistently had less anxiety. This may be because the fermentation process produces high levels of tryptophan, which converts into serotonin in the brain, thus producing a relaxing effect. (*Conscious Eating by Gabriel Cousens, p.736*)

Kefir's ample supply of phosphorus – the second most abundant mineral in our bodies -- helps utilize carbohydrates, fats, and proteins for cell growth, maintenance and energy.

Kefir reduces cholesterol – Studies have shown that milk cultured for 24 hours with live kefir pearls (grains) has been found to have cholesterol reduced up to 63% and milk that was stored to 48 hours had up to 84% of cholesterol disappear.

Kefir kills harmful bacteria: Scientists tested the Kefir in the Caucasus Mountains for any type of harmful bacteria. But much to their surprise, they found nothing. Deep in the mountains where sanitary conditions are much worse than ours, the scientist refused to believe there was no harmful bacteria to be found. Creating a possible scenario that a piece of animal fecal matter would fall into the milk, they injected the E. Coli bacteria into the Kefir. Within 24 hours the E. Coli was destroyed by Kefir whey's beneficial bacteria. Kefir has also demonstrated the ability to kill H. pylori infections when bacteria alone could not. In addition, the complex micro flora of Kefir has also shown a keen ability to greatly stimulate our immune system, ward off infections.

This is because when Kefir is consumed as a drink, it creates a healthy mucous lining in the colon, which acts as a good medium to support the growth of beneficial bowel flora which helps to prevent parasitic infections and cancer as well as constipation. This means Kefir is beneficial in preventing many gastrointestinal disorders.

Kefir is a natural antibiotic which exudes bacterial inhibitory factors that prevent the growth of harmful bacteria. Various medical reports have shown that Kefir has been helpful in the treatment of psoriasis, eczema, allergies, migraines, gout, rheumatic arthritic conditions, candidiasis and colitis. The World Health Organization has reported that Kefir has been effective in treating tuberculosis and typhoid fever.