

## The Benefits of Fermented Foods

This is another topic that has been receiving more press recently which is a good thing. Fermented foods have been around for centuries and have been vital to many cultures. As we have become more “modernized” with the processing and packaging of our foods, many have lost touch with this art. There are many benefits to not only eating fermented foods, but ideally making them yourself. And for most of the time, it doesn’t take a huge amount of effort to start this process.

What are the benefits? Gut health is the main one. There have been countless studies going over the absolute need for a healthy gut. The book, *The Second Brain*, the doctor discusses how our gut lining has much more serotonin than in our brain. Serotonin is needed for many things, including one’s mood, appetite and sleep. There are also studies linking an unhealthy gut to many chronic diseases from arthritis to cancer.

So why all the talk about our gut? Because of our “modern” society there are a host of foods and chemicals we put into our body that break down the gut lining. The main ones that come to mind are antibiotics (remember if you don’t eat organic grass fed meats, you are getting the antibiotics from the conventional meats). Another, is potential foods sensitivities or allergies, one of the biggest is gluten. It can cause inflammation in the gut which breaks down the lining. The next one is something we do to ourselves...stress. As we increase our stress levels we release a hormone called cortisol that breaks down tissue mainly the gut (as well as bone and the emotional part of our brain, the hippocampus). If we have this unhealthy gut (you will hear in the media or websites as leaky gut), things that shouldn’t get into our body do, which can result in our bodies being more inflamed as well as absorbing certain toxins that should have been eliminated.

So what are some fermented foods? Some of the top ones are pickles (or anything pickled--beets, okra, etc), sauerkraut, dark chocolate, yogurt (you can get or make dairy free if you are sensitive), kombucha, kefir and many others. If you decide to make on your own, you will also be saving money in the process. I am making a batch of 25 pickles now which cost me about 10 dollars.

As we increase these foods, we can increase our overall health by healing our gut, helping our digestion and even reduce cravings for other foods as we nourish our body.

Any questions let me know.