

### **Steps to making Kefir:**

1. Place the kefir grains in a quart jar and fill it 3/4 full with milk. (Approximately 2-3 Tablespoons of grains per jar or 1 Tbsp. of grains to every 1 cup of milk)
2. Either loosen the lid of the ball jar slightly for breathing or remove lid and cover the top with a coffee filter or paper towel and secure with a rubber band.
3. Store the jar in a warm dark place (68-80°F) in your home. Shaking or agitating the jar a few times a day might increase the surface area of exposure for a faster and more thorough fermentation if desired but not required.
4. Kefir typically takes about 18 to 24 hours to form. (I've let them sit as long as 5 days in the past without any problems.) Extended fermentation times creates a thicker product that is more sour tasting.
5. Once the milk has thickened/curdled and there is a clear layer of liquid at the bottom of the jar with a mountainous layer on the top, the Kefir has formed. Pour the entire contents of the jar into a plastic fine mesh strainer with a collection bowl below to catch the ready to consume Kefir. This may strain through with separation creating a clear liquid and a thicker, creamy Kefir. Stir these two together in the collection bowl to make it all uniform.
6. Enjoy Kefir right away or place it in the fridge to cool it before consuming. Any surplus will be safe to store in the fridge and use for up to 30 days.
7. The kefir grains that were collected in the strainer can then be placed in a fresh jar of milk and the process repeated.

### **Tips/Warnings/Do's and Don'ts:**

1. Extended time in direct light will destroy many precious nutrients in the Kefir. Store in a dark place. (Mine are in the cupboard with my vitamin supplements)
2. If the temperature in the house is cooler, it will slow the fermentation process. If the temperature is warmer, it will speed the fermentation process. Extreme heat will kill the kefir grains. Be careful not to place the kefir or kefir grains in a jar that is still hot from the dishwasher. If the grains have been stored in the fridge or freezer for some time and are colder, it will take some time to acclimate back to room temperature before the fermentation can proceed.
3. If you are going on vacation or simply want to stop fermenting milk for a period of time, store your grains in a sealed jar with milk in the refrigerator. Use a larger milk to kefir ratio so that there will be plenty of lactose for the bacteria to dine on.

This will keep the grains alive while slowing the fermentation process. The kefir may still be used when ready to resume the process.

4. Trust your feral instincts and don't consume foods that smell or taste rancid.
5. If your health and diet have been of poor quality for some time, avoid an uncomfortable transition into better health by gradually introducing kefir into your diet. Example: 2oz/day for first 2 days, 4oz/day for next 2 days, 6oz/day for next 2 days
6. Enjoy Kefir plain or add other ingredients to make it more enjoyable. My morning breakfast routine is typically Kefir mixed with fruits, veggies, healthy fats, and other superfoods. Fruits I enjoy in the smoothie include: Banana, mixed berries, kiwi, mango, melon etc. Vegetables include: spinach, broccoli, kale, cucumber, celery, sprouts etc. Healthy fats include: coconut oil, EVOO, Avocado. Additional superfoods include: ground flax, chia seeds, nuts and seeds, exotic greens etc. Then blend it all together in the NutriBullet blender.
7. Hundreds of other recipes can be found online. My family's favorites are: Kefir smoothie popsicles, Kefir avocado dip, Kefir pancakes, and smoothies. The pancakes are DELICIOUS; unfortunately, the heat does destroy the bacteria and decreases the health benefits.
8. Healthy kefir grains will grow up to 25% in size/quantity with each cycle/batch. They can quickly overwhelm you, so keep talking about the great health benefits to friends and family to see who may be interested in taking some off of your hands when this happens. Some people eat the extra grains or feed them to their pets. Drop off surplus grains back to me for redistribution to the community.

#### **Other resources:**

[www.baltuska.com](http://www.baltuska.com) please enjoy my blogs and share them on social media!

[www.nationalkefirassociation.com](http://www.nationalkefirassociation.com) it's official

[www.culturesforhealth.com](http://www.culturesforhealth.com) books, products, recipes, how-to

[www.bodyecology.com](http://www.bodyecology.com) articles, testimonials, recipes

[www.mercola.com](http://www.mercola.com) great health tips for preventative healthcare

[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) perfect short how to videos (search "Kelly Baltuska" to watch mine)

## **What exactly is this stuff?**

Kefir has a very mysterious history. I have read that the kefir grains cannot be recreated and must be acquired and grown from someone who is already enjoying their benefits. Some companies sell “starter cultures”, but these lose potency after a few batches and must be replaced. The grains may have originated in the Caucus Mountains, where nomadic shepherders would store their refreshing milk in leather pouches on their belts. After a long days work they would reach for their drink, it will have transformed into what they described as a deliciously effervescent, bubbly drink. The name Kefir comes from the Turkish word “keif” – meaning “good feeling” – for the sense of well being experienced after drinking it.

The fermentation is triggered by Kefir “grains”, consisting of various species of symbiotic bacteria and yeast. There are no true grains in the process, the term was applied because of the appearance and has stuck ever since. Bacteria (mostly lactobacteria and streptococci) ferment lactose, the sugar found in milk; yeasts perform alcohol fermentation, producing negligible amounts of alcohol. The resulting drink has a pleasantly tangy taste. Easy to digest, Kefir cleanses the intestines while boosting your immune response to illness.

Kefir is an excellent source of protein, calcium, fiber and A, B, C, and D vitamins. Plus, it’s gluten- free, 99% lactose-free. It can and should be enjoyed any and all the time. Massive over-consumption may cause slight dehydration and constipation.

***“Let your food be your medicine, and your medicine be your food.”***

**-Hippocrates**

Proper gastrointestinal health is paramount in optimizing the immune system. There are many exciting discoveries being made about how our gut communicates with our brain. As it turns out, we are and have always been teaming up with beneficial bacteria to properly defend ourselves from the foreign pathogens and to properly digest and assimilate nutrients. If we count the cells of our body and compare it numerically to the cells of bacteria living on and within us, we are 90% bacteria. Scientists are excitedly analyzing and documenting the human micro-bio genome and finding out that the different types and varying ratios of bacteria in the human population are just as unique and diverse as the genetic genome.

There are many things that effect, for better or for worse, your gut micro flora bacteria. Prescription antibiotics are often given to wipe out harmful bacteria in our bodies. Unfortunately, these drugs do not differentiate between good or bad bacteria. They wipe out ALL of them, leaving you dangerously vulnerable. Chlorine in our tap water acts as an antibiotic in a similar way. Birth control, NSAIDs, highly processed food diets that are low in fiber and high in sugar also contribute to unhealthy gut flora.

The foods we eat and dietary choices we make shape our gut micro flora. Refined carbohydrates, sugar and processed foods, fructose in fruits, all encourage, feed, and perpetuate the harmful dysbiosis in our guts. One of the more common and harmful conditions is a yeast overgrowth by the name of *Candida Albicans*. When this flourishes within us, it presents itself and masquerades as many different nasty symptoms including: fatigue, hyperactivity, acne, irritability, poor sleep quality, abdominal pain, joint pain, constipation, diarrhea, flatulence, reflux, heartburn, postnasal drip, cough, recurrent urinary tract infections, menstrual irregularities, sinus congestion, sugar and alcohol cravings, inability to lose weight, depression, anxiety and much more.

Conversely, there are foods and dietary choices that we can make to encourage, feed, restore and perpetuate helpful and beneficial bacteria within our gut. Fermented foods like pickles, sauerkraut, kefir, kombucha, and fermented vegetables actually have thousands of colonies of healthy bacteria on them, and we simply eat them to gain benefits that can include: increased energy levels, more comfortable digestion, better immune system, clarity of mind, improved sleep quality, and much more. There are also varying types and brands of supplements in a pill form that can provide some probiotic benefits.

Many different types of medical professionals are utilizing the knowledge and treatment of the human gut micro flora to treat and manage many different conditions including: ADHD, sleeping problems, fibromyalgia, asthma, allergies, constipation, diarrhea, IBS, autism, poor immune systems, depression, sinus congestion, anxiety and many others.

There are other foods and supplements that we can eat that act as “weed-killers” for harmful bacteria. These have been shown to have bacteriostatic and/or bactericidal properties. Good examples include: onions, honey, cabbage and other cruciferous vegetables, sauerkraut, kim chi, and herbs like: thyme, mint, basil, cinnamon, rosemary, cumin, chili peppers, caraway seed, coriander, dill, nutmeg, ginger, mustard, and parsley. Try to include some of these in your diet to help kill off the bad guys living in your gut.

If your diet has been poor for a long time, have patience when adopting healthier dietary habits. When you begin changing your diet to promote a better balance of healthy bacteria, it is wise to gradually introduce the changes because you can get much worse before you get better with too much of an aggressive and abrupt change. The current state of your gut might be reluctant to change and cause a fuss in an effort to resist. Just as it is the case with all other healthy habits, a gradual change that is practiced and repeated perpetually will have a greater impact in the long run.

## What is it Kefir good for?

*The following list includes some of the many benefits and uses that Kefir has been known for. This information is not a guaranteed health claim. It may include anything from “old wives tales” to specific published case studies. This information has not been approved by the FDA to diagnose, treat or cure any disease.*

1. Allergies
2. Natural antibiotic
3. Liver disease
4. Gallbladder, gall stones
5. Detox salts, heavy metals, radionuclides, alcohol, antibiotics
6. Kidney stones
7. Defend pathogenic microorganisms
8. Lowers level of LDL cholesterol
9. Cleans the gastrointestinal tract
10. Irritable Bowel Syndrome
11. Gastritis
12. Pancreatitis
13. Ulcers
14. Colon cancer
15. Improves digestion
16. Improves many body functions
17. Improves immune system
18. Candida
19. Hypertension / blood pressure
20. Inhibit growth of cancer cells
21. Speeds up healing process
22. Psoriasis
24. Eczema
25. Inflammatory diseases
26. Reduces size of tumors
27. Heart disease
28. Reverses calcination of blood vessels
29. Clears the blood vessels
30. Boosts energy
31. Natural “feel good” food
32. Lung infections
33. Normalizes metabolism
34. Acne
35. Anti-oxidants and anti-aging properties
36. Nourishes hair
37. Gum disease
38. Lessens side effects of medicines

39. Replenishes body of good bacteria after antibiotic
40. Balances the microflora of the body's digestive system
41. Lowers blood lipid levels or cholesterol and fatty acids
42. Diarrhea
43. Constipation
44. Promotes bowel movement
47. Anti-stress properties
48. Sleeping disorders
49. Depression
50. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder ADHD
51. Improves neurological functions like reflexes, memory retention, attention
52. Reduces flatulence
  
53. Enhanced digestion of dairy foods. Those Lactose intolerant may be able to enjoy Kefir
54. Yeast infection
55. Eliminates vaginal odors
56. Wrinkles
57. Arthritis
58. Colitis
59. Gout
60. Migraines
61. Rheumatism
62. Stomach disorders
63. Detoxifies the body
64. Improves protein quality of milk, and enhances absorption and digestion
65. Good bacteria manufacture B vitamins such as B3, B6 and folic acid
66. Tuberculosis
67. Stomach cramps
68. Chronic intestine infections
69. Liver infections
70. Asthma
71. Bronchitis
72. Sclerosis
73. Anemia
74. Hepatitis
75. Healing effects on catarrh, digestive nodes, astral nodes, bilious complaints
76. Leaky gut syndrome
77. Metastasis

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