

SAMPLE 1 – Private Client

Kefir Grains Can Improve Gut Health and Overall Wellness – Must Read!

The human body is packed with trillions of bacteria, fungi and viruses, collectively known as the human microbiome. While there are many types of microbes in your body, bacteria are the most widely studied. It is known that there are more bacterial cells in the human body than there are human cells. Some of this bacterium can be associated with disease, however the majority is essential for your immune system, weight control and many other health aspects.

The majority of your microbes live on your skin and in your intestines. The microbes living in your intestines mainly take up residence in an area of your large intestine called the 'cecum'. The cecum is a small area located at the junction of the small and large intestines and is considered the beginning of the large intestine.

The human gut microbiome is made up of up to 1,000 species of bacteria, with each species having an important role to play in your body. There are the "good" and "bad" bacteria which populate your gut; however, they normally exist in a balance which favours the "good" bacteria, helping to prevent an overgrowth of the bad guys. The majority of the species are essential for your health and wellbeing.

Why is gut health crucial for your wellbeing?

Over millions of years of evolution humans have evolved to live with microbes, and without the gut microbiome, survival would be very difficult. Recently many studies have shown how the health of our gut can be linked to a wide range of diseases and conditions such as anxiety, depression, obesity, autism and diabetes. There has also been some indication that the gut microbiome may be linked to sleep quality.

The guts connection to health

The diversity of your gut bacteria appears to be associated with either good health, or disease. A lower diversity of bacteria has been seen in people with diseases such as diabetes, eczema, inflammatory bowel disease, coeliac disease, obesity and psoriatic arthritis when compared to healthy controls. On the other hand, bacterial diversity is often associated with a healthy gut.

- A diverse range of healthy bacteria has been shown to reduce inflammation, regulate mood, improve immune function and reduce the risk of many chronic diseases.

The gut microbiome and blood sugar

Our gut bacteria have been shown to have an association with controlling blood sugar, which may help to reduce the risk of diabetes. This includes both type 1 and type 2 diabetes. One study examined infants who were at a high risk of developing type 1 diabetes (1). This study

found that the diversity of gut bacteria in the infants dropped significantly while the number of unhealthy species increased just before the onset of the disease (1).

In another study it was seen that people who ate the same foods had very different blood sugar reactions, indicating that their differences in gut bacteria may play a role (2).

1. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25662751>
2. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26590418>

The gut microbiome and heart health

Recently a study of 1,500 people showed that their gut bacteria played a significant role in promoting HDL (good) cholesterol and triglycerides, particularly Lactobacilli (3). While some other species may contribute to an increase in trimethylamine N-oxide, a chemical which is associated with blocked arteries.

Other research has shown a link between probiotics and controlling blood pressure. One such study used kefir (due to its excellent source of probiotics), with rats to study the effects of supplementation on hypertension (4). The rats who were treated with kefir for nine weeks showed lower rates of blood pressure along with improved intestinal permeability (a healthier intestinal barrier to prevent harmful substances from passing into the blood stream) (4).

3. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/26358192>
4. <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2018/04/180425131909.htm>

The gut microbiome and brain health

The gut-brain connection is the physical and chemical connections that exists between the gut and the brain. The gastrointestinal tract is sensitive to emotions. Feelings such as anxiety, sadness, anger and happiness can often trigger gut symptoms. One way the effect the brain has on the gut can be seen is when the thought of eating signals the gut to release digestive juices. However, this connection goes both ways. When there is something wrong in the gastrointestinal system the gut can send signals to the brain. And a troubled brain can send signals to the gut. As a result, a person's stress, anxiety or depression can either be the cause of gut distress, OR the result of gut distress.

How do I take care of my gut bacteria?

Eat a diet rich in plant-based foods: Your microbiome loves fibre. A diet rich in fibre helps to feed your healthy bacteria.

Reduce or avoid processed foods: Many food additives have been shown to negatively affect the gut bacteria. Some studies have shown that sugar substitutes, emulsifiers and other additives often used in processed food can disrupt the gut microbiome.

Increase prebiotic foods: Prebiotics feed healthy bacteria and come from many plant-based foods such as bananas, oats, onions, garlic, spinach and wheat.

Eat fermented foods: fermented foods contain a wide range of bacteria which are beneficial to your health. Foods such as sauerkraut, miso, some types of yogurt and kefir are all good sources.

What is kefir?

Kefir is a fermented milk product similar to yogurt, however kefir is fermented from both yeast and bacteria. Like yogurt, kefir has a sour taste, however has a much higher content of probiotics compared to yogurt. You can purchase kefir from many health food stores, or using kefir grains, it's very simple to make your own.

- **What are kefir grains?**

Kefir grains look a bit like small cauliflowers which are around the size of wheat kernels. The grains consist of casein and gelatinous colonies of bacteria which grow together symbiotically. Kefir is mainly comprised of lactic acid producing bacteria along with yeasts.

- **Where can I buy kefir grains in Australia?**

Kefir grains can be purchased online, or from most health foods stores.

The Good News

It only takes a matter of days to change your gut microbiome for the better. Remarkable changes have been seen in people who have taken on traditional diets which are high in plant-based and probiotic foods (such as kefir), showing positive changes to their gut health within a week.

Improving your gut microbiome can be as simple as a diet change. Also, by adding probiotic rich foods such as kefir, you can increase these benefits by adding the good guys to your diet along with consuming prebiotic foods. Kefir is a natural way to balance and restore your healthy gut bacteria. A healthy gut is an important aspect for good health. When your gut is happy, you are happy.

To find out where to buy kefir in Australia visit **NourishMe Organics**, or **shop online** (*link to their online shop*) for all your kefir making requirements.