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Fermented foods for dogs.

Why spoiled food may be good.

By [Myndi Bruntz](#) in [Holistic Care](#)

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Feeding APBT's is a quest for life and therefore the need to always be on the lookout for anything nutritious and absorbable you can add to the diet to make them healthier.

When looking at commercial prebiotic and probiotic products being marketed for humans and dogs then also to consider "a whole food" that contained natural probiotics, instead of using powders, capsules and packages.

Looking at fermented food for dogs?

That's where fermented foods come into play – these amazing foods do have many benefits.

What are fermented foods?

This is where chemistry meets nutrition.

Fermentation occurs as a result of oxidation causing a "release of energy to produce organic acids, gases, and/or alcohol," - this food then is already slightly pre-digested and broken down before your dog eats it.

This means less work for your dog to digest this food.

There are two main types of fermentation: alcohol fermentation, yielding wine and beer, and lactic acid fermentation, which makes dairy and vegetable products.

These are cultured by using bacteria, yeast, molds, or a combination of these aren't the bad bacteria, yeast and molds but safe for human and animal use.

These are beneficial to the body and ferment, usually with lactose, which is the sugar that is found in milk.

These foods are alive and actively fermenting when they're eaten – not the freeze

From research.

Fermented foods have been around for thousands of years, dating all the way back to 7000 BC when the Babylonians were the first to ferment beer.

After that, humans learned to preserve meats and fish and eventually make butter and cheeses using fermentation.

Since the 1800s, we've used pasteurization as a widespread means of preservation, but fermentation is a much older practice and, more importantly, it doesn't harm the enzymes and probiotics of the food like pasteurization does.

In more modern times, some of the focus has turned to the health benefits fermented foods have to offer.

For instance, [Ilya Mechnikov](#) was a Russian zoologist who lived in the late 1800s.

He made several great discoveries about immunity, but he was also one of the first to make the connection between fermented foods and longevity.

His theory was that aging was caused by too much bad bacteria in the gut flora and that fermented foods could help combat senility by restoring balance.

Much of his research was influenced by Bulgarian peasants who had extraordinary life spans, and their diets, which regularly included fermented foods.

Two Bulgarian peasants he studied: Baba Vasilka and her son Tudor, aged 126 and 101 years old!

Mechnikov even began to drink sour milk daily himself and noted his own health improvements.

After his death, others were inspired to continue his research and that led to a lot of our knowledge today.

Nutrition & psychological disorders – The GAP diet.

[Dr. Natasha Campbell-McBride](#) is another fascinating researcher; she has developed a revolutionary GAP diet – the Gut and Psychology Syndrome Diet.

She has studied how reintroducing balance to the gut's flora using fermented foods impacts many different diseases – even curing her own son of autism!

She initially began as a neurosurgeon, but pursued a secondary degree in human nutrition as she began to learn more about the link between imbalanced gut flora and a plethora of disorders.

The entire focus of her approach is to use nutrition – particularly fermented foods and probiotics – to help, or even reverse, many disorders.

She has extensively studied the effect of nutrition on psychological disorders and has shown the connection between good gut and brain function.

You can read more about her GAP diet [here!](#)

Why is the balance in your dog's gut so important?

Look at it this way: 70% of the immune system is based in the gut.

If your dog's gut flora is compromised, that means that 70% of his immune system is compromised too.

Gut bacteria outnumber body cells by 10 to 1 so it's vital that a healthy dog's good bacteria outweigh the bad.

There are many things that can wreak havoc on your dog's gut.

The overuse of antibiotics is a huge issue.

Even if you avoid using antibiotics on your dog, it's in the meats they eats - unless you're very scrupulous in sourcing meats that are antibiotic-free, you're still exposing them to the lingering effects of antibiotics given to livestock.

Then factor in how many foods are now genetically modified (GMO), processed and pumped full of synthetic preservatives – yep all things that can be damaging to gut flora.

Looking at the detrimental effect of chlorinated and fluoridated water, environmental pesticides and chemicals.

Every year, our agricultural industry sprays millions of tons of pesticides on crops.

It's no wonder that our dogs need help maintaining a healthy balance.

So how can we help the good flora outnumber the bad?

Probiotics!

They will compete with the bad bacteria for nutrients in the gut. There are also several strains that produce bacteriocins, which kill pathogenic bacteria, and change the pH of foods to create an unwelcoming environment for the pathogens.

However, the goal should not be to completely eradicate the pathogenic bacteria. Ideally the gut balance should be about 85% good bacteria to 15% bad bacteria.

This is because the 15% will expose your dog to different pathogens and viruses, allowing the dog to build up resistance to them and further boost the immune system.

Supplements vs whole foods.

While there are many different supplements available its recommend to use fermented foods instead.

Whole food is always better than supplements, and fermented foods are no exception.

With whole foods the cultures are alive and thriving on the nutrition offered by the food, and are more likely to survive the stomach and arrive at the intestines intact and ready to colonize.

Supplements on the other hand, are less effective because they are freeze-dried and have to become active in the body, then survive passage through the stomach before colonizing in the gut.

However to be noted is that if you have to use powdered probiotics, you can mix them with the food, then let it sit out for about an hour before feeding, so the probiotics have a chance to activate.

Alternatives.

Different options for fermented foods include fish sauce, kombucha, root vegetables, whey, and dairy products like kefir, yogurt, buttermilk, and cheese.

Dairy is the most common, but you should always try to use whole, unpasteurized milk products if possible.

Also, while meats and fish may be your first choice in feeding your dog, be careful to choose a good source.

Be aware of synthetic nitrates and nitrites are commonly used as curing agents and should be avoided, but you can find some products that use celery juice, which is a natural source, instead of the synthetic alternatives.

To learn more about the kefir! [Click Here!](#)

As with any food addition, go slowly and introduce small amounts at a time.

You really can't overdose on fermented foods, but that you should still add them gradually to avoid a "die off."

This happens when large numbers of bad bacteria die suddenly and the body has to rid itself of the toxins.

It isn't a bad thing, but when this happens all at once, it can cause some detoxification symptoms.

Things may briefly get worse before they get better – especially if your dog is experiencing immune or digestive issues, or has always been on a commercial dry kibble diet.

A healthier gut means a healthier pet.

You may think that fermented foods will only help your dog if he has some sort of digestive issue, but there are so many more issues it can help with.

Because so much of the immune system is located in the gut, you can help a dog that is immunocompromised providing fermented foods on a daily basis.

Herewith a list of some health problems that can be helped with the addition of fermented foods to rebalance the gut:

IBS (colitis, Crohn's disease)

Leaky gut

Helicobacter pylori (stomach ulcers)

Lactose intolerance

Diabetes

Tooth decay and gum disease

Atopic dermatitis

Yeast infections

Post-surgical infections (like MRSA)

Hypothyroidism

When building up your dog's gut using fermented foods and probiotics, it's important to remember that this is an ongoing process.

You need to use them regularly.

The goal is to create colonies in your dog's intestines and this is an ongoing process.

Also, remember that the stomach is not an easy environment and it's hard for probiotics to survive into the intestines, so by providing fermented foods regularly, you're giving them a better chance of reaching the gut where they can colonize.

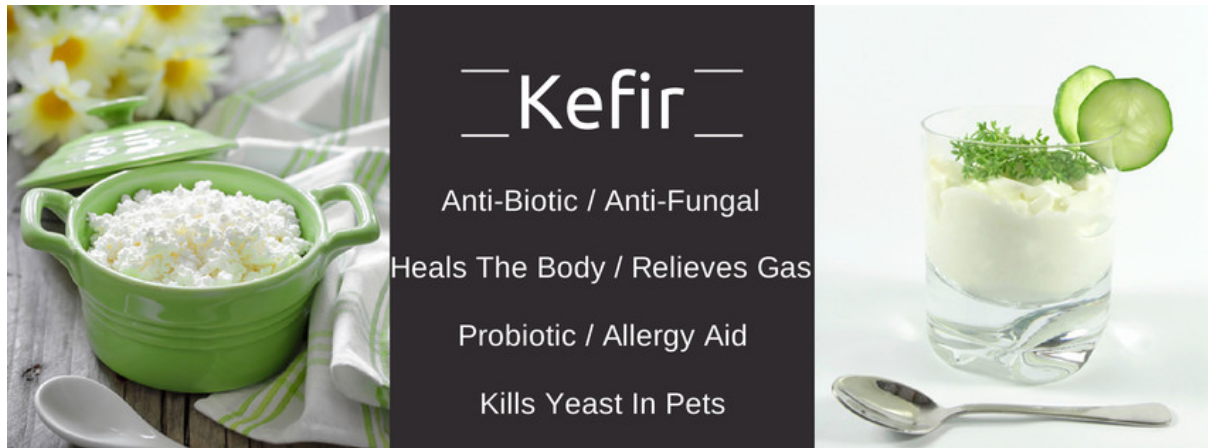
Probiotics in the form of fermented food are already active, so they are more likely to survive than the supplement alternatives.

Consistency is key here, so be sure to provide a small amount of fermented foods on a regular or even daily basis and be ready to see your dog thrive!

This information is taken from Roxanne Stone's presentation of Fermented Foods during the 2015 Raw Roundup.

So long yeast, hello kefir!

By [Rodney Habib](#) in [Nutrition And Diet](#)



Do you feed the superfood kefir to your pets?

These days, pet foods can contain up to 70% carbohydrates. These carbs are broken down to sugars, which then fuel the yeast in your dog's bodies.

Too much yeast = big time problems!

If you cannot switch to a low carb pet food (like a species appropriate raw food diet) then you will need to supply your dog with something to attack the yeast.

Meet kefir.

These dairy or water-based grains have a multitude of vitamins and minerals.

They provide a wide variety of probiotic organisms and have super awesome healing qualities.

Pronounced "kah-fear!" according to the folk of the Caucasian Mountains, this "grain of life" is similar in appearance to regular yogurt, however has a way bigger engine under its hood!

Kefir contains several major strains of friendly bacteria not commonly found in yogurt such as Lactobacillus Caucasus, Leuconostoc, Acetobacter species, and Streptococcus species. It also contains beneficial yeasts, such as Saccharomyces kefir and Torula kefir, which control and eliminate destructive pathogenic yeasts in the body.

Some studies have shown kefir to ward off salmonella and E. Coli as well as having the capability to kill H. Pylori.

Benefits of Kefir.



Kefir health benefits are vast and that is due to the 30 different strains of good bacteria and yeast present in those cloud shaped grains! The bulk of those grains are a combination of insoluble protein, amino acids, lipids and complex sugars.

Kefir is rich in B complex vitamins such as Vitamin B1, B12, as well as Vitamin A, Vitamin D, Vitamin K and biotin.

The main minerals present in kefir tend to be calcium, phosphorus and magnesium.

Kefir provides anti-biotic and anti-fungal properties;

A must add after the use of antibiotics to restore balance to your pet's digestive tract;

Helps to prevent allergies in your pet.

Beneficial for candidiasis and heart problems in pets/humans;

Vitamin B will regulate the normal function of the kidneys, liver and nervous system for you and your pet;

Helps to promote healthy looking skin, boosting energy and promoting longevity;

All the micro-organisms present strengthen the digestive system;

Helps to alleviate gas, bloating and heartburn;
Probiotic aid may help with IBD, eczema and bad breath;
Has been linked to aid in gastritis, pancreatitis, abdominal peptic issues, skin psoriasis, rheumatism, joint disease as well as gouty arthritis, weakening of bones, anemia, as well as leaky digestive tract syndrome;
Able to reduce risk of a number of malignancies, such as colon cancer malignancy, stopping the increase of cancerous cells;
Health advantages comprise of acne pimple management or treatment, sleep problems, unhappiness, asthma attack, respiratory disease, high blood pressure, all forms of diabetes, long-term weakness syndrome, allergic reactions, colitis, looseness of the bowels, and so forth.

Where can you find it?

Nowadays, kefir can be found in any supermarket, but try sourcing it from your local Farmers Market to assure that it is local, fresh and hormone/GMO free!

Kefir is traditionally made with cow, goat or sheep milk, but you can also make it with coconut or almond milk (also coconut water).

As always: variation, moderation and balance!

Kefir is very safe, this is not to say that some people or pets don't react negatively to kefir, especially when first trying it.

When introducing kefir to your dogs, remember to always go slow.

Give your dog's system time to adjust.

For the first few days to a week try half the recommended dosages.

This will avoid digestive upset as your dog's system adjusts to the increase of good flora in their GI tract.

Dosages.

Recommended minimum daily intake of kefir.

Small size dogs – 1 tsp. – 1 tbsp.

Medium size dogs – 1 – 2 tbsp.

Large dogs – 2 – 3 tbsp.

Kefir can work miracles for yours and your dog's body, so go ahead and start incorporating it into your diets.

Remember the three factors mentioned above: variation, moderation and balance and reap the benefits that this wonderful grain has been offering people all over the world for many generations.

[For more info on kefir](#)

[For more info on why goat's milk kefir is ultra nutritious](#)