

Self Care is the New Health Care

One of the top areas of recent developments in our health, where doctors and pharmacies are not paying attention quick enough to is our microbiome — our bacterial gut balance. Many medications and products we use disrupt our microbiome. It is time to become aware the role good bacteria play in our body and stop decimating it. The microbiome is the good bacteria in our body and makes up 90% of who we are! We are only 10% human. These bacteria :

- ☯ digest food for us and give us back the nutrients
- ☯ keep us lean
- ☯ kill viruses and pathogens — and cancers --and offer a lot of support to the immune system in general,
- ☯ are directly linked to mood, anxiety, ADHD, many depressions are due to bacterial imbalances in the gut
- ☯ bacterial balance is being credited to help prevent age related cognitive decline.
 - o “With recent advances in the understanding of gut-brain interactions, there have also been reports suggesting the fermented food’s efficacy, particularly for cognitive function improvements. These results are strengthened by the proposed biological effects of fermented foods, including neuroprotection against neurotoxicity and reactive oxygen species.”
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5216880/>

What can we do? The answer is NOT to pop another pill in the from of probiotics. We do not know enough about these bacteria to supplement. Just like vitamins, bacteria play different roles in our body so we need a diversity in bacteria. Most supplements are one type of bacteria, they can get too many of one type of bacteria and still leave an imbalance. Foods supply the bacteria in the right balance.

How do we get this diversity? By eating a variety of fermented foods with each meal.

Foods that increase our good bacteria:

In the dairy family (milk NOT so good for you, fermented milk = good for you:)

- ☯ Plain yogurt, Cottage cheese, sour cream, kefir, raw cheese, buttermilk, creme fraiche, lassi, arayan (pronounced iron)

Other drinkable probiotic beverages

- ☯ Kombucha, beet kvass, wine and beer if no added sulfites or other anti bacterial agents.

Condiments that are fermented include:



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☯ Olives from an olive bar, pickles that have been pickled in a salt brine, apple cider vinegar, soy sauce, miso soup, mustard, mayonnaise, ketchup, Tabasco sauce, and Worcestershire sauce

☯ Fermented fish (popular in Asian cultures), dosa batter used to make Indian dosas, tempeh in Japan, and poi from Hawaii :).

Chocolate :) cocoa beans are actually fermented to make chocolate.

☯ Make sure you get dark chocolate 70% or darker.

Fermented vegetables of all types, fermented in a salt brine like:

☯ sauerkraut and kimchi and your own homemade fermented vegetables

Very easy to do! When you eat at oriental restaurants they bring a little cup of vegetables before your meal, those are fermented vegetables to help you digest the food they are about to serve you. It is very easy to make your fermented vegetables. See below for the simple instructions.

What it looks like to eat a small portion of fermented foods with each meal in a day of my life?

☯ Yogurt, cottage cheese, kombucha, or kefir with breakfast and maybe a shot of ACV in my morning turmeric tea.

☯ Kimchi, sauerkraut, olives, my own homemade fermented foods, or sour cream with my main meal.

☯ I like a light evening supper of sautéed vegetables with a little raw cheese and red wine (without added sulfite).

It is easy to make your own fermented foods! As easy as mixing up salt water, adding your chopped veggies, and letting it sit on your counter for 3-4 days ... Thats it! Easy peasy.

Making some of your own fermented foods — from simpler to more complex.

Lacto-Fermented Turnips

Turnips are an interesting, nutritious alternative to things like potatoes. They are a member of the radish family and can have a bit of a bite to them.

When fermented, turnips take on a great tang which mellows out that radish-like bite and makes them a crunchy and delicious pickle for snacking.

Ingredients:

- 4 cups water
- 1 heaping tablespoons sea salt
- 8-12 medium turnips (or kohlrabi), scrubbed well and sliced 1/8-inch thick



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- 2 teaspoons red pepper flakes

Instructions:

- 1 Make a brine by combining boiled water and sea salt, stirring until salt is completely dissolved. Set aside. Water should cool to room temperature before pouring over vegetables.
- 2 Put 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes in each of two quart-size jars. Add sliced turnips, leaving 1-2 inches of headspace in each jar.
- 3 Pour the brine over the turnips and red pepper flakes, pushing the turnips down to release any air bubbles. Again, leave 1-2 inches headspace in each jar.
- 4 If necessary, weigh the turnips down under the brine to keep them submerged. I use a few cabbage leaves over the top, tucking the sides down in to hold all the goodies in the brine. Do not eat the cabbage leaf that is out of the brine.
- 5 Cover the jar with a loose lid, or unbleached cheese cloth, secured with a rubber band or metal ring.
- 6 Let sit on your counter culturing at room temperature (60-70°F is preferred) until desired flavor and texture are achieved — usually about 3-4 days but it varies (foods ferment faster when it is hot outside). If using a tight lid, burp daily to release excess pressure.
- 7 Once the turnips are finished, put a tight lid on the jar and move to cold storage.

Makes 2 quarts.

Wild Fermented anything! Another one of my favorite wild ferments:
Using the same recipe as above to make the brine.

In your mason jars add sliced cabbage, a chili pepper or two (or sliced jalopenas), dried seaweed flakes, peeled garlic cloves, some onion slices, cut up turnips, beets, and any vegetables you prefer. Follow the rest of the above recipe the same.

EASY PICKLES

I love pickles! However you can not buy them anymore without pure ingredients -- they have been bastardized by the processed food industry. I found a simple solution, It is very easy to make pickles yourself. So make your own pickles and let the pickle industry know you want pure ingredients.

Anna's Pickles from Poland Recipe

(These pickles are made in a brine so they are truly pro-biotic. Pickles made with distilled white vinegar would be less so.)

I make 2 quart at a time, This recipe is for 2 quarts.

Begin by heating 2 glass 1 quart mason jars in your oven at 225° for 10-15 minutes. Let the jars cool before use.



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For the brine - Boil 1 quart of water, while the water is still hot add 1 heaping tablespoon mineral salt. Let brine cool to room temperature.

Small cucumbers are best but you can use any cuke.

Put a dill flower or leaves (fresh dill — a flower before it turns to seed is the best) in the bottom of the jar along with a few crushed cloves of garlic. If you like you can add an oak or currant leaf to add crispiness.

Some people in Poland add small pieces of fresh horseradish root.

Pack your pickles in tight the top with another dill flower.

Then leave on the countertop as long as desired (no more than 3-4 days) depending on the temperature. Each day gently shake the jars and then open them for a moment to let them gas off. When they are the desired taste they go to the fridge to complete the fermentation process.

Enjoy! Some people in Poland enjoy the pickles only slightly fermented like 1 or 2 days. I like them a little more "done".

HOMEMADE SOUR CREAM RECIPE :)

<http://www.culturesforhealth.com/sour-cream>

Making sour cream at home is easy, you will need only cream and a starter culture. While making sour cream takes only a few minutes of prep time, allow a full 24-48 hours for the sour cream to culture and cool prior to serving.

The simple version:

1 cup organic grass fed heavy cream

1 tablespoon organic grass fed yogurt

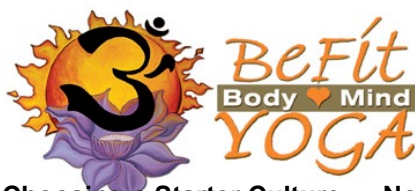
Mix together in a mason jar. Cover with cheesecloth and the threaded ring only. Let sit for 1-3 days, checking each day for consistency and flavor. Refrigerate when it is ready.

For more details see below:

Choosing a Cream

The first step to making sour cream is choosing an appropriate cream for the project.

- Organic, pastured, grass fed from cows humanely treated is #1 most important for the best fresh cream:
- Whipping cream (whole cream) will yield the thickest sour cream.
- Half-and-half can be used, but the sour cream will have a thinner consistency. Dry milk powder can be added to improve the consistency, if desired.
- Raw cream can be used but will yield a thinner consistency than if pasteurized whipping cream is used. Look for vat pasteurized, this is the best way to pasteurize.
- Avoid ultra-pasteurized (UP) or ultra-high temperature (UHT) cream, as it yields inconsistent results when used for culturing.



Choosing a Starter Culture — Notes from CulturesforHealth.com :

There are a few options for starter cultures:

- Direct-set sour cream starter culture. The advantage of a direct-set culture is that the powdered starter is kept in the freezer until you are ready to make sour cream.
- Cultured buttermilk or **yogurt** is convenient to use as starter for culturing cream, as well. Use 1 tablespoon starter per cup of cream.
- Milk kefir grains or finished milk kefir can be used to make Kefir Cream, a good substitute for sour cream.

Making Sour Cream

1. Once you've chosen the cream and starter culture, mix the cream and starter culture together.
2. Cover the container with a coffee filter or cloth, secured with a rubber band.
3. Place the mixture in a warm spot, 70°-80°F, for 12 to 18 hours or until thickened.
4. Once the mixture has set, cover the jar with a lid and place it in the refrigerator for at least 6 hours to halt the culturing process and cool the sour cream.

Add a small amount of dry milk powder for a thicker sour cream. Alternatively, heat the cream to 180°F

Sauerkraut

approx. 5 lb of cabbage sliced

2 tablespoons Sea Salt

1 Tablespoon caraway seeds (optional)

In a large bowl mix cabbage with salt and caraway seeds if using them. Let stand 10 minutes.

Put in mason jars and punch it down to release the juices. Top with half an onion or big cabbage leaves to keep the sauerkraut submerged in juices. Cover jar with cheesecloth and threaded jar ring.

Check the next morning to make sure juices have covered the cabbage.

Place in a cool spot and check every other day for 2 weeks, skimming off any scum that comes to the surface.

Let stand for 4 weeks total. Then replace cheesecloth with mason jar lid and store in fridge for up to 6 months.

Basic Beet Kvass

Kvass is a traditional beverage in many cultures. This beet kvass is a simple, easy-to-make, and inexpensive way to take in a cultured beverage.

Ingredients:

- 2-3 beets, depending on size
- 1 heaping tablespoon sea salt
- 2 quarts filtered water



Instructions:

- 1 Chop beets into 1/2-inch pieces and place in a half-gallon jar.
- 2 Add salt; fill jar with water, leaving 1 inch headspace.
- 3 Cover the jar with a tight lid, airlock lid, or coffee filter secured with a rubber band.
- 4 Culture at room temperature (60-70°F is preferred) until desired flavor and texture are achieved. If using a tight lid, burp daily to release excess pressure.
- 5 Once the kvass is finished, put a tight lid on the jar and move to cold storage. The kvass flavor will continue to develop as it ages.

When most of the liquid has been drunk from the kvass, refill the jar and culture at room temperature again for a second, weaker batch.

Tastier Beet Kvass

Ingredients

- 2 quarts filtered or mineral water
- 1 tablespoon sea salt
- 2 beets, unpeeled if organic, roughly chopped
- 1/2 lime with rind, quartered
- A couple knobs of ginger

Method

- 1 Place all the ingredients in a 2 quart mason jar and give them a good stir to dissolve the salt.
- 2 Cover the top with cheese cloth and, secure the outer metal ring only. You want the gas to be able to escape
- 3 Be sure to stir the vessel contents every day.
- 4 Keep in room temperature (60-64F) for 4 to 5 days.
- 5 Strain and transfer to flip top bottles or jars, place in a cooler place (38 to 40F — I just put them in my fridge) for another week. They are then ready to drink — flavor will continue to develop even after the first week.
- 6 When ready to drink, if you want extra carbonation, leave it out for a few hours in room temperature.





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Tips

Kvass is a bit like wine - it takes time to develop its full flavor. I recommend to keep it in the fridge (the second part of the fermentation process) for as long as a week for the salty flavor to soften and for the ginger and the citrus to come through.

Pickled and Canned Red Beets

Scrub the beets.

Leave the tails and about a half inch of the stems attached. This is to keep all of the color and nutrients from bleeding out while they cook.

Put the beets in a pot and cover them completely with water.

Place the pot on the stove. Cover and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to a simmer and cook until the beets are soft when pierced with a knife, about 45 to 60 minutes.

Drain the beets.

Let them cool until you can handle them.

Peel the beets. First, cut off the tops and tails and then the skins should just slide off. It's fun!

Cut the beets. You can choose any size you like but I prefer a small bite-size chunk. The larger the chunks, the more jars you'll need as they won't be as space efficient. Put the chunks into a pot.

Heat your canning jars. I just simply put my clean jars in a 225 degree Fahrenheit oven for about 15 minutes. This sterilizes them and keeps them hot while you fill them one by one.

Sterilize the canning lids. I place them in a small pot, cover them with water, and bring to a boil. Remove from heat and leave them in the water until you are ready to use them. When I'm open kettle canning like this, I try to use the lids while they are still very hot.

Put the pot of beet chunks on the stove and

☞ add 3 cups of apple cider vinegar

☞ 2-3 cups of granulated sugar

Bring the beets and juice to a simmer.





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The level of the juice should be about even with the beets. If it doesn't come up high enough, mix up a bit more of the brine solution, maybe another cup of vinegar and 1 1/4 cups of sugar. Add this to the pot and check the level again. Keep the beets at a simmer while you fill the jars.

Fill your jars one by one. Remove a hot jar from the oven and fill it up with beets. Bring the beet and juice level to within 1/4 inch of the top of the jar, but not higher than that. Wipe off the top of the jar.

Using a clean, damp cloth, wipe the top rim of the jar...where the lid meets the jar, not where the ring screws on. You don't want any food particles or dirt to get between the lid and the jar that would interfere with the seal.

Place a hot lid on top of the jar and screw on a ring, nice and tight. Not too tight but it should be snug.

Let the jars cool.

Let them sit on the counter to cool completely (over night is best). Remove the rings from the jars and if the jars seem sticky, wash them in warm, soapy water. Store the jars in a cool, dark, dry place for the longest shelf life. I've known beets to last at least two years. I've never had any around for longer than that so I don't know how long they will actually keep.

Vietnamese Pickled Mustard Greens (Cải Chua)

Makes 2 quarts

Ingredients

For the Vegetables

2 1/2 pounds mustard greens

4 stalks green onions

1 1/2 tablespoons pickling salt

4 Thai bird's eye chiles (or 2 serrano peppers)

For the Brine (Optional)

2 cups water

1 tablespoon pickling salt

Method

I use komatsuna in this recipe, but you can use any mustard green you have on hand. Thoroughly wash, dry, and chop the greens into bite-sized portions. I like to de-stem the komatsuna and cut the stems into 1-inch pieces, then use a [chiffonade](#) technique to cut the leaves into long ribbons.

Chop the green onions into 2-inch pieces.

In a very large bowl, combine the greens, onions and salt, and toss to evenly distribute all the salt. Let the vegetables sit for 20 to 30 minutes while the salt draws out moisture.



Knead the veggies with your hands until the greens have wilted and the volume is reduced to half. There should be a pool of liquid in the bottom of the bowl.

Split the chiles in half lengthwise. Fill the jars about two-thirds of the way with equal amounts of greens and chiles. Tamp down the veggies with the back of a spoon to squeeze out as much liquid as you can.

If your veggies are not fully submerged in their own juices, you can top them off with brine. Bring water and salt to a boil, and stir until the salt is dissolved. Let the brine cool, then pour it into your jars until the veggies are barely covered (they will continue to expel liquid as they ferment, so you don't want to overfill the jars).

Run a chopstick or the end of a long spoon around the jars to release any trapped air pockets. You want to make sure the veggies are completely covered in liquid.

Line the jars with plastic zip-top bags and press down on the veggies. Fill the baggies with a little water (or a rock) to keep them weighted. The baggies should completely contact the surface of the veggies so that no part is exposed to air.

Seal the jars loosely with lids and store them at room temperature out of direct sunlight. Every day or so, check the jars to ensure the veggies are still submerged, pressing down on them with a spoon as needed to release more liquid. As long as the liquid stays above the veggies, you won't see any mold.

As the greens start to ferment, they'll turn a lovely shade of olive. Properly fermented mustard greens retain their mustardy bite, but have a pleasantly sour taste and smell like pickles... spicy pickles! If they smell off in any way (yeasty, rotten, or not very pickle-like), chuck them and start over.

You can taste the *cải chua* after one week to gauge the amount of sourness and spice, but typically it won't be ready for two to three weeks. The warmer your room is, the faster it'll ferment.

Once the *cải chua* has soured to your liking, remove the baggies, reseal with lids, and refrigerate. It will keep for a long, long time — much longer than you'll need before you finish it all!

Homemade Kimchi Recipe (makes about 1 quart)



Ingredients:

- 1 medium head napa cabbage or purple cabbage
- 1/4 cup Himalayan or Celtic sea salt
- 1/2 cup water
- 5–6 finely chopped garlic cloves
- 1 teaspoon fresh grated ginger
- 1 teaspoon coconut palm sugar
- 2 to 3 tablespoons seafood flavor like fish sauce or shrimp paste (or use more water)
- 1 to 5 tablespoons Korean red pepper flakes (depending on how spicy you like it)
- 8 ounces Korean radish or daikon radish, peeled and cut finely
- 4 scallions, trimmed and cut finely

Directions:

Slice the cabbage lengthwise into quarters and remove the cores. Then slice into fine strips.

Add your salt to the cabbage in a large bowl and use your hands to massage the salt into the cabbage until it starts to become soft and give off water. This might take several minutes.

Let the cabbage stand for 1 to 2 hours, then rinse it under water for several minutes. Combine the garlic, ginger, sugar and seafood flavor in a small bowl and mix to form a smooth paste, then add it to the bowl with cabbage.

Add the chopped radish, scallions and seasoning paste, then massage all the ingredients together using your hands until they are coated. Pack the kimchi mixture into a large glass jar and press down on it until the brine rises to cover the vegetables.

Make sure to leave at least 1–2 inches of space and air at the top of the jar (important for fermentation). Tightly close the lid and keep the jar standing at room temperature for 1 to 5 days.

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Check the kimchi once a day, pressing down on the vegetables if need be to keep them submerged under the liquid brine. Taste the kimchi after several days to see how if it has become sour enough to your liking, and if not let it continue for several more days before storing in the refrigerator sealed for up to 3 months.

And here is another kimchi recipe. The first one is from Dr. Axe, the one below is from Dr. Mercola.

Shrubs or Sipping Vinegars

In North America during colonial times, sipping vinegars were commonly used as both medicines and a way to preserve fruits and herbs in a deliciously consumable infusion.

Excerpt from Mountain Rose Herbs:

[Holy Basil](#), or Tulsi has been used in various cultures for generations as a healing medicinal herb and is used significantly in Ayurvedic medicine. Tulsi is considered to be an adaptogen as it helps balance the adrenals secretions and is believed to give us strength when facing normal daily stress. It also lends itself well to



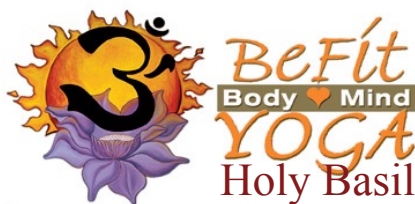
sipping vinegars. With spicy leaves that are peppery, lemony, and with undertones of clove and licorice, these flavors are a good match for vinegars.



A sipping vinegar or shrub is basically a combination of vinegar, sugar, and plant matter. You can use any vinegar you'd like: apple cider,

champagne, red wine, etc. I prefer to use an organic apple cider for medicinal infusions, but I often use organic white vinegar for infusions used for culinary preparations (more "glamorous" fruity shrubs) or those I intend to give as gifts.

When it comes to the sugar, I like to use raw honey in medicinal vinegars, but this is where you can use what works best for you too. The infusion can then be taken as a tonic or can be mixed with sparkling water, juice, alcohol, or a mixture of all for a delicious beverage. You can adjust the sweetener to taste and you might be surprised how delightfully mellow a well-infused sipping vinegar can be...Holy Basil Sipping Vinegar



BeFit
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Holy Basil Sipping Vinegar (with optional Blueberries)

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Basil and berries are an interesting and delicious combination and this blending makes for a wonderful beverage. Feel free to experiment with other fruits or go with just the [Holy Basil](#).

Begin by cleaning a quart jar, after washing and drying thoroughly, pour some vodka in it and shake it around. Then dump the vodka and let the jar dry.

Using a clean quart jar, put 1-2 cups organic Tulsi into the jar and cover with 3-4 cups vinegar (your choice of apple cider vinegar, white vinegar, wine vinegar, or rice vinegar), making sure to cover the herbs entirely. Cover with a plastic lid or wax paper or and let sit to infuse 1-6 weeks. You may infuse these in a cool, dark place, or in the sunlight if you'd like.

Using a strainer or several layers of [cheesecloth](#), strain the vinegar and compost the herbs. While the vinegar is straining, mash ½ cup organic berries (if I don't have fresh, I thaw berries that we've frozen from our garden and use those). Add 2-3 Tablespoons of raw local honey to the berries and smash up together. I like to let them sit for at least an hour, but usually several hours before mashing and combining with the strained vinegar. Combine the vinegar and sweetened berries in a clean jar and shake to fully incorporate (you can also blend in a blender or use an immersion blender for extra smoothness.) This is best stored in a sealed jar in the refrigerator.

For one beverage, add ¼ cup sipping vinegar and fill glass with sparkling water, club soda, soda water, seltzer, bubbly, etc. (or you can just add water, juice or your [organic tea](#) of choice.) If you'd like a little alcohol, make room for an ounce or so of liquor or white or rose wine.) ¼ cup of this vinegar with sparkling wine or champagne is delicious too! You can also take this as a tonic by the tablespoon or shot glass.

You can use almost any herb to make a sipping vinegar with . . . such as allspice, anise, basil, caraway seeds, chive blossoms, cilantro, cinnamon, cloves, coriander, cumin, dill, fennel seeds, garlic, ginger, lavender flowers, lemon peel, marjoram, mustard seeds, nasturtiums, onion, orange peel, oregano, parsley, peppercorns, peppermint, rose petals, rosemary, savory, tarragon, or thyme.

Salad Dressing Vinegars

From the list of vinegars and herbs above you can also make salad dressing vinegars. With a clean jar as done above, place 3 Tablespoons of dried herbs or 3=4 sprigs of fresh herbs per pint of vinegar is usually a good amount. You can experiment with more or less herbs if you like for different flavors.

Cover the container tightly with a non-corrodible, non-metallic lid and place in a cool dark place to steep. Allow to steep for 2-4 weeks.

Once finished strain the herbs out and place the vinegar in sterilized bottle. You can add some sprigs of fresh herbs or peppercorns or chili pepper to make it more attractive and add more flavor. use within 4-6 months.



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