**Health Benefits Sauerkraut**

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Boosts the Immune System

The probiotics found in sauerkraut can help keep your gut microbiome in balance. Research published in Critical Reviews in Food Science and Nutrition in July shows that pro-biotics can help with the development of the immune system, reduce inflammation, help regulate metabolism, and maintain intestinal balance.

**Boosts Metabolic Disease Risk**

The lactic acid bacteria found in sauerkraut with active microorganisms may result in positive changes in the gut microbiome that reduces inflammation, including inflammatory proteins associated with Type 2 diabetes. This indicates that eating sauerkraut and other

fermented foods may help reduce the risk of diabetes and other chronic metabolic diseases.

**Benefits Mental Health**

Because of the vast amount of information that travels along the brain-gut axis, the health of the gut and brain are intimately involved.

A balanced gut environment can translate into better brain and cognitive function. Studies have shown that probiotics can affect behavior, mental outlook (anxiety, depression), brain function, and mood. And may help reduce symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder and improve memory.

**Improves Heart Health**

The combination of high fiber content and probiotics makes sauerkraut a heart-friendly food. Fiber works to reduce cholesterol, and probiotics can also have this effect, as well as assist in lowering blood pressure in people with hypertension. Sauerkraut is also a good source of vitamin K2, a nutrient that may reduce your chances of developing heart disease because it prevents deposits of calcium from gathering in your arteries.

**Good Source of Nutrients**

Cabbage is a great source of vitamins and minerals, including vitamins C, K, B6 and folate, as well as iron, manganese, fiber, copper, and potassium. Two more bonuses: It’s super low in calories and has zero fat.

But sauerkraut also contains sulfur-based phytochemicals called glucosinolates, which break down into substances that have antioxidant and anti-inflammatory powers. One of those substances, sulforaphane not only activates anti-inflammatory and antioxidant activity but may also have an antidiabetic effect.

**Sauerkraut Buying and DIY Tips**

* Choose only unpasteurized, raw, fermented sauerkraut to ensure that you’re getting viable microorganisms and thus the probiotic effects. You can find these products in the refrigerated section.
* Don’t cook sauerkraut. This kills the beneficial bacteria. Add sauerkraut after the food has been cooked. Don’t buy sauerkraut made with vinegar. This product isn’t fermented and thus doesn’t provide probiotic benefits, although other nutrients are present.
* Try making your own sauerkraut. This can be fun for the entire family. Feel free to add other ingredients, such as turmeric, ginger, carrots, garlic, caraway seeds, or beets.

**Ways to Enjoy Sauerkraut**

* Add it to sandwiches. Although the Reuben is the sandwich typically associated with sauerkraut, try adding it to your favorites. Sauerkraut is great on a wheat pita packed with sprouts, cucumbers, shredded cabbage, and hummus, or add some to a grilled cheese and tomato sandwich.
* Top your salads with it. Sauerkraut provides the tangy vinegar taste to all types of vegetable salads.
* Put it in dips. Whether you like salsa, guacamole, or a zesty yogurt dip, sauerkraut provides a great low-calorie, high flavor kick that goes with veggie sticks and crackers.
* Add it to soup. Remember, if you want the probiotic benefits, don’t add it to your soup until you’re ready to eat it. It tastes great in any vegetable soup.
* Add it to a burrito. Spread a few teaspoons on a tortilla; add your favorite refried beans, lettuce, tomatoes, and cheese, and roll up the fun!
* Top baked potatoes and sweet po9tatoes with it. Who needs sour cream when you can perk up your potatoes with sauerkraut.

**Bottom Line**

Fresh raw, unpasteurized sauerkraut is a zesty, healthy veggie to add to your menu. All you need is a few teaspoons of this yummy sour cabbage to add variety and health perks to your life.