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Fermented Foods and Human Health

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Abstract

Humans need nutrients to survive, essential for good health and strength of the body. However, current biological, social and psychological practices greatly affect people's dietary intake, leading to health-related problems. Situation which forces individuals to take drugs and supplements, with many undesirable secondary effects. In this way, scientists investigate uncountable strategies to solve these complications, and one of the alternatives is fermented foods. About 30% of the human diet consists of fermented foods, consumed in most societies with different cultures and lifestyles. They are cost-effective due to their preparation using available seasonal raw materials from local farming. This type of alimentation, widely distributed, was adopted for thousands of years for its organoleptic and mainly preservative characteristics. The fermentation gives specific sensory proprieties and prolongs shelf life/safety depending on the products and fermenting microorganisms. The most studied category of fermented foods is dairy products. Nowadays, their consumption is motivated by health-related prospects. Increasing evidence of the association of fermented foods with health has further increased their popularity in recent years. Fermented foods are a source of biotics (probiotics, prebiotics, synbiotics, postbiotics and parabiotics), related to various health benefits, from the digestive (assimilation, microbiota equilibrium...) to the immune system modulation. Differences in the microbial consortia present or used have various health effects. Several studies evaluated their anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial, anti-diabetic, anti-oxidative and other effects induced by beneficial components produced during fermentation processes. The adoption of fermentation technology is in progress and many start-ups are created in the West.

Key Words: *Functional Foods, Fermentation, Diet, Biotics, Health.*

