


The Amazing Healing Properties of Fermented Foods

Sayer Ji | [Naturalblaze](#)

Between the hard and fast dichotomies of cooked and raw,  dead and alive, is this beautiful thing called fermented.

A place where many of the digestive challenges associated with raw foods (e.g. enzyme inhibitors, anti-nutrients, [lectins](#)) are overcome in favor of not just preserving their benefits (e.g. enzyme activity, vitamin content, life energy), but amplifying them. Also overcome are the adverse consequences of cooking, e.g. enzyme destruction, vitamin activity degradation, oxidized fats, denatured proteins, etc., while still benefiting from the enhanced digestibility and assimilation that certain cooking applications offer. Fermented food is in many ways the complementary union of cooked and raw, as well as their transcendence – an image, not unlike the Tai Chi, comes to mind.

In fact, fermentation has almost heretical power in the realm of both medicine and nutrition, being quite capable of literally “raising the dead,” as well, revitalizing and infusing with living and breathing energy a food ingredient that has been cooked into oblivion, or, a human whose body has been poisoned close to the point of death with antibiotics, or similarly [biocidal drugs](#) or chemicals.

There is no lack of scientific confirmation for the indisputable value of fermented food for the promotion of health and wellbeing. In fact, one could consider fermented foods like [kimchi](#), natto, apple cider vinegar, and even – in moderation – wine, coffee, chocolate and beer, ‘medical foods’ of sorts. At GreenMedInfo we have been indexing these functional applications in disease prevention and treatment

straight from the research housed on National Library of Medicine, and have found over 140+ diseases that may be prevented or ameliorated by their use.

There are a broad range of fermented foods we could look at to illustrate their power to heal. After all, every single *culture* on the planet used (not a semantic coincidence:) *culturing* to sustain themselves. But for this short article we will focus on Asian traditional preparations, since there is already such a huge body of clinical research demonstrating their amazing health effects:

- **Kimchi** – a probiotic strain isolated from the fermented cabbage preparation kimchi known as **Lactobacillus brevis** is capable of degrading organophosphorus pesticides.
- Kimchi – a probiotic strain known as *Bacillus pumilus* found within this fermented food is capable of degrading **bisphenol A**, a powerful endocrine disruptive chemical.
- **Miso** – a fermented soy food has been shown, when consumed regularly, to reduce the risk of **breast cancer** in women by up to 54%.
- Miso – capable of regressing **colon cancer** growth in the animal model.
- **Natto** – A fermented soybean extract that has been shown to **suppress plaque buildup** (as measured by the intima media thickness) in the arteries in an animal model.
- Natto – capable of contributing to **nerve regeneration** following sciatic nerve crush injury.

This is, of course, only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to illustrating the remarkable properties of fermented food. We encourage our readers to take a look at our extensive database on the subject of the health benefits of fermented food.

Another important point to make about fermented food is that

it generates an entirely novel set of nutrients and medically important phytochemicals, in addition to what is found in the starter culture ingredients themselves. This is not unlike what happens when we consume a raw or cooked food, and the beneficial bacteria within our gut go to work to break down anti-nutrients, or secrete enzymes we ourselves are not capable of producing, or at least not in adequate quantities.

There is something known as the food metabolome. It is that set of small-molecule metabolites of foods – numbering over 3,500 – that are byproducts of our organism interacting with food to produce novel new byproducts.

For example, flaxseed contains high levels of lignans, which once thrown into the fermentive crucible of our digestive process, are broken down into at least two important metabolic byproducts: [enterolactone](#) and [enterodiol](#) – both which are phytoestrogens, and are largely responsible for flaxseed's tumor regressive actions in [estrogen sensitive cancers](#) such as breast and prostate cancer. These two compounds only exist *in between* the human organism and the flaxseed organism, and would not exist without the “third organism,” if you will, which is the vast populations of beneficial bacteria within our alimentary canal.

So important are these microflora to our existence, that some scholars have suggested we reclassify ourselves as a “meta-organism,” as we are a composite of a wide range of organisms – in fact, 10 times more numerous are these “other” organisms than our own cells. Indeed, as we discussed in a previous article, even our own [mitochondria](#) – the powerhouses of our cells – were once bacteria living outside of our bodies.

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