



## *Frequently asked questions about Kefir...*

### **What is Kefir?**

Kefir is a cultured probiotic beverage similar in taste and texture to drinkable yogurt. Kefir's flavor, similar to that of yogurt, is mild and slightly tart and made from milk fermented with kefir cultures. Kefir originated over 2000 years ago in the Caucasus Mountains-where many people live well over 100 years. The value of fermented foods in the diet is now coming to the forefront. The word kefir is thought to have been derived from the Turkish word "keif" for "good feeling". Over the years, kefir has been collecting a long list of health benefits. These include potential benefits such as: Enhancing the immune system, stimulating digestion, easing lactose intolerance, lowering cholesterol, protecting against cancer and controlling harmful yeast overgrowth.

### **What are probiotics (cultures)?**

Probiotics, which literally mean "beneficial to life," are live cultures that provide health benefits beyond basic nutrition. Most probiotics include the live active cultures often added to foods like yogurt. Researchers have studied bacteria extensively and considerable evidence indicates that there are several strains of essential good-for-you bacteria that have an ability to promote healthy gastrointestinal functions, increase immunity and help prevent the development of cancer-causing toxins throughout the body. *Redwood Hill Farm's Goat Milk Kefir has ten live and active cultures to produce a wide array of health benefits.* Our custom blend of probiotics include: *L. bulgaricus*, *L. acidophilus*, *L. casei*, *L. rhamnosus*, *L. lactis*, *L. diacetylactis*, *S. thermophilus*, *L. cremoris*, *Leuconostoc cremoris* and *B. bifidum*. Kefir made in the U.S. has cultures added to each batch to insure consistently live and active bacterial action rather than using "kefir grains" which are bacteria that is used over and over again much like sourdough starter.

### **Why should I add probiotics to my diet?**

The bacteria in the digestive system plays a very important role in our health and can easily be thrown out of balance by everyday lifestyle stressors. Factors that can offset this precious balance include: antibiotics (which sometimes kill both "good" and "bad" bacteria), infections (bacterial, viral and fungal), alcohol consumption, chronic diarrhea, travel, a highly processed low fiber diet and stress. Probiotics are the easiest way to help combat these factors, keeping harmful bacteria in check.

### **What is the difference between kefir and yogurt?**

Although kefir and yogurt are similar in taste and texture, Redwood Hill Farm's Kefir has more variety of live and active cultures than yogurt with a total of 10, some specific to kefir only. Most yogurts have 2 or 3 cultures, our natural goat milk yogurt has four.

### **What is the difference between cow milk kefir and goat milk kefir?**

It's all in the milk! Goat milk protein, carbohydrates and fats are all easily digested. Goat milk is similar to human milk in its protein composition, having more short and medium-chain fatty acids, whereas cow milk tends to contain long-chain fatty acids. Cow milk, as opposed to goat milk, contains agglutinin, which also hinders digestion. Agglutinin causes the fat particles in milk to group together, forming clusters which can be difficult for humans to digest.

### **Can I take too much kefir?**

You can take too much of any food. We are all individuals and have to find out our own requirements. What is a healthy portion for one person can be harmful for another. Negative effects of kefir intake are not known, however, people with an intolerance to lactose should start with very small amounts like a teaspoon at a time to see how they do. That being said, most people with lactose intolerance can consume kefir because the bacterial cultures in the kefir feed on the lactose in the milk.

### **Does your kefir contain gluten?**

*Not a bit!* Redwood Hill Farm Goat Milk Kefir, like all of our natural dairy products, contains no gluten nor do we produce any products in our creamery that contain gluten. In addition kefir is a naturally low glycemic food.

### **Does your kefir contain yeast?**

No, our Redwood Hill Farm Goat Milk Kefir does not contain yeast. In Europe this is a common addition to kefir which results in an alcoholic content as well.

### **Why does the nutritional label list sugar?**

Our kefir (and yogurt) contain no added refined sugars. The sugar listed on the plain kefir comes from the “milk sugar” or lactose found in the milk. The fruit flavored kefir has fruit juice in addition to the lactose to sweeten the kefir which increases the sugar content found on the nutritional label.

### **Why don't you add inulin to your kefir like other brands?**

Fructo-oligosaccharides (FOS) or inulin is a soluble fiber that is often referred to as a “prebiotic” as it essentially serves as a fertilizer for the bacteria in your colon. Studies show that inulin/FOS seems to favor certain lactobacillus species of bacteria, especially the Bifidus species. For this reason, it is being promoted as a supplement to feed the “good bacteria” in our guts. Studies show that inulin can also increase the absorption of several minerals, including calcium, which is why it is so prevalent in dairy products. Although inulin has many beneficial actions, there are disadvantages for some people. The main one seems to be in taking inulin when the colon is filled with “bad” bacteria and yeast because inulin may promote their growth as well. A case in point: recent studies have shown that inulin encourages the growth of Klebsiella, a bacteria implicated in Ankylosing Spondylitis and in increased intestinal permeability (leaky gut). In addition, there has been one documented case of anaphylactic (allergic) reaction to inulin and foods containing it can be rather gassy. Inulin is found naturally in many foods and we believe this is the best way to utilize its many health benefits. Asparagus, garlic, onions, Jerusalem artichokes, chicory root and leeks are just some of the foods containing inulin. Instead of adding refined, super concentrated inulin to your food, we recommend eating the foods that naturally contain inulin.

### **Why does my bottle of kefir sometimes puff out and make a little “pop” noise when I open it?**

The live bacteria in kefir produce CO<sub>2</sub> as a by-product, which will cause the bottle to expand. This is a good thing as it is a sign of the live and active cultures in your kefir.

### **Why is Kefir tangy, seem slightly carbonated, or bubbly?**

Since our Kefir contains live and active cultures, there will be a small, varying degree of effervescence. In addition, the kefir consistency can vary depending on the amount of time passed after it was produced. All this means is that the probiotic kefir cultures are active and working. This does not mean the product is spoiled in any way. Spoiled kefir will resemble spoiled milk and have a very pungent odor.

### **How can I flavor the Traditional Plain Kefir?**

With your favorite fruit and extracts. One of our favorites is adding maple syrup and pomegranate juice, mmmmmmm!

### **Can I use Kefir in cooking?**

*Absolutely!* Try Kefir in any recipe where yogurt, sour cream or buttermilk is called for.

### **What kind of milk is your kefir made from?**

Redwood Hill's Natural Cultured Kefir is made with 100% fresh grade A goat milk from our family of farms. In 2005, Redwood Hill Farm goat dairy became the first humane certified goat dairy with the Humane Farm Animal Care organization ([www.certifiedhumane.org](http://www.certifiedhumane.org)). Some of these standards of certification include: a nutritious diet without antibiotics, or hormones, animals raised with shelter, resting areas, and sufficient space and the ability to engage in natural behaviors. Redwood Hill's family of producers share our commitment to humane care and treatment of their dairy goat herds.

### **Our Philosophy on GMOs:**

The use of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) is a concern to our valued customers, as well as to Redwood Hill Farm & Creamery. Our position as it relates to our natural goat milk products: “We do not support the concept of GMOs in food and will never knowingly use ingredients that contain GMOs.” The ingredients used in all of our products do not contain DNA from GMOs, according to information provided by each of our suppliers.

### **What is the expiration date for your kefir?**

The last date of sale is stamped on the outside of the bottle. If it has not been opened and kept properly refrigerated, it will probably last longer than this date. Once opened and in your home refrigerator, the kefir will last longer if it is stored in your home refrigerator at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or less. Your kefir will also last longer if you don't leave it sitting out on the breakfast table. In addition, the kefir will last longer if you don't drink it out of the bottle directly which introduces your mouth bacteria into the bottle of kefir.

# **Redwood Hill Farm & Creamery**

**NATURAL, ARTISAN GOAT MILK, CHEESE, YOGURT AND KEFIR**

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