



Food Technologists Focus on Kombucha

Twenty five members of Chicago Section IFT attended an event this month that focused on kombucha. The event, held at [Imbibe](#), educated participants on this black or green tea based beverage that is gaining popularity for its high probiotic content. This session was led by SportFuel, a boutique nutrition consulting firm that coaches professional athletes, including members of the Chicago Blackhawks and Bulls, on healthy eating.



In addition to giving a tutorial on how to make your own kombucha, SportFuel staff highlighted a few products that they believe to have benefits similar to those gained by drinking kombucha. SportFuel didn't focus on any specific RTD kombucha brands, but instead promoted probiotic capsules from [Dr. Ohhira's Probiotics](#) and spores from [Go MegaSpore](#) for those who prefer their probiotics in this form.

The speakers taught attendees about SCOBY (symbiotic colony of bacteria and yeast), which is what enables the tea in kombucha to be fermented. The end result of the probiotic rich beverage can play a larger role in our overall health than many of us realize. SportFuel explained how, in some cases, this digestive aid, which has the ability to kill the bad bacteria within us, in addition to filling our gut with good bacteria, also has the ability to decrease our desire for sugar consumption. This function will likely increase the popularity of kombucha as the FDA recently came out with an official recommendation that no more than 10% of our daily calories should come from sugar.

Though kombucha is most well-known for improving gut health, proponents also claim that it can boost mental clarity and mood stability, which may contribute to the rise in demand for kombucha products in retail. Some of the most well-known kombucha retail brands include Health-Ade and GT's, with brands such as Humm and Kombucha Wonder Drink continuing to emerge.



Slight variants to traditional kombucha are Live Kombucha Soda, whose flavors include culture cola, refreshing rhuberry and root beer, and a line of sparkling probiotic drinks from KeVita, with bold flavors such as lemon cayenne and mojito lime mint coconut. As consumers continue to explore new ways of eating healthy, there are plenty of options available for those who are not quite ready to start making kombucha on their kitchen counters.