Reading

Read the text. Then answer the questions according to the information given in the text. Choose a, b, c or d.

1. **What is the main idea of this text?**
   - **a.** Mankind has been using fermentation for thousands of years.
   - **b.** Fermenting vegetables is the best way to include probiotic food in one's diet.
   - **c.** Probiotic foods can be used to improve a person's overall health.
   - **d.** There is substantial evidence that probiotic foods increase one's vitality.

2. **According to the text, how can the consumption of probiotics be beneficial?**
   - **a.** Harmful bacteria are prevented from entering the body.
   - **b.** The stomach is able to absorb nutrients more effectively.
   - **c.** Gastrointestinal problems are completely eliminated.
   - **d.** The balance of different bacteria in the intestines is restored.



3. **In the second paragraph, what can be inferred about the process of fermenting vegetables?**
   - **a.** It is difficult to create the conditions in which bacteria can grow.
   - **b.** It is straightforward and requires little skill.
   - **c.** It requires a basic knowledge of chemistry.
   - **d.** It is an increasingly common practice.

4. **What factor may affect the quality of probiotics contained in fermented vegetables?**
   - **a.** the length of time that a vegetable is left to ferment
   - **b.** the freshness of the vegetables at the time of fermentation
   - **c.** the conditions in which the vegetables are stored after fermentation
   - **d.** the temperature that fermented vegetables are later exposed to

5. **According to the text, what was the primary motive for fermenting vegetables in the past?**
   - **a.** to preserve them
   - **b.** to make them safe to eat
   - **c.** to use them in medicine
   - **d.** to improve their taste

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Probiotic Foods

The very idea of eating food containing bacteria may seem illogical, but certain strains of bacteria are considered essential for optimal health and well-being. Indeed, there are many foodstuffs available today which contain large amounts of beneficial types of bacteria called *probiotics*, whose usefulness lies in the fact that they help to even out the numbers of good and bad bacteria present in the stomach. By adding good bacteria to our digestive system to make up for the losses caused by, for example, taking antibiotics, probiotic-rich food is believed to offer several important health benefits: most notably, the minimising of gastrointestinal issues and the promotion of a healthy immune system.

One of the best ways to incorporate more probiotic-rich, or 'live', food into one's diet is through the consumption of vegetables which have been fermented. A known method of producing fermented vegetables at home involves soaking them (chopped or sliced) in a solution of sodium and then leaving the mixture aside for a few days. This process alters the chemical composition of the vegetable, meaning that it often takes on a sour, tangy taste. Importantly, it is during this process that beneficial bacteria are allowed to develop and multiply, transforming the vegetable into one that is exceptionally rich in nutrients. To gain the full probiotic benefit of fermented vegetables, such produce should be eaten in its raw form, as probiotics are sensitive to heat and can be damaged during cooking.

References to fermentation – both of vegetables and dairy products – date far back into history. In the absence of modern-day refrigeration technology, fermentation was considered a necessary way to extend the life of certain foods. Not only that, but there is evidence that ancient societies also recognised the health benefit of consuming such food. Historical records indicate that, for instance, fermented dairy products such as yoghurt were commonly prescribed to relieve digestion problems.



score ___ / 10

TOTAL SCORE ___ / 80

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