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What is the Raw Food Diet?

Have you started hearing about the Raw Food Diet? It's gaining popularity and buzz, not just as a diet to lose weight, but a diet for a long and healthy life. We eat so much in the way of processed food that we don't even stop to think about what we're putting into our bodies, and how far we've come nutritionally from our ancestral, agrarian roots.

A raw food diet means consuming food in its natural, unprocessed form. There are several common-sense rationales for why this is a good idea. Processing and cooking food can take so much of the basic nutritional value away. Think of some of the conventional wisdom you've heard about for years, such as: If you cook pasta just to the al dente (or medium) stage, it will have more calories, yes, but it will have more the nutritional value in it than if you cooked it to a well-done stage. Or you probably remember hearing not to peel carrots or potatoes too deeply, because most of the nutrients and values are just under the surface.

The raw food diet means eating unprocessed, uncooked, organic, whole foods, such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, legumes, dried fruits, seaweeds, etc. It means a diet that is at least 75% uncooked! Cooking takes out flavor and nutrition from vegetables and fruits. A raw food diet means eating more the way our ancient ancestors did. Our healthier, more fit ancestors. They cooked very little, and certainly didn't cook or process fruits and vegetables. They ate them RAW. Their water wasn't from a tap; it was natural, spring water. Maybe they drank some coconut milk on occasion.

Doesn't it just make sense that this is how our bodies were meant to eat? It's a way of eating that's in harmony with the planet and in harmony with our own metabolisms. Our bodies were meant to work, and need to work to be efficient. That means exercise, certainly, but it also means eating natural, raw foods that require more energy to digest them.



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Why The Raw Food Diet

Because cooking takes so many nutrients and vitamins OUT of food, you automatically start feeding your body what it needs when you stop cooking food and start eating uncooked, nutrient-rich foods. A raw carrot has exponentially more nutrition than a cooked carrot.

Cooking also alters the chemistry of foods, often making them harder to digest. Why do we have so many digestive problems in this country? Because we're putting foods into our bodies in a form that we weren't designed to absorb. High fiber, high water content fresh produce abolishes constipation of the bowels, cells and circulatory system. Obstructions are cleared and blood flow increases to each and every cell in the body. Enhanced blood flow is significant for two reasons: as mentioned above, blood delivers nutrients and oxygen to living cells, and carries away their toxic metabolites.

Obesity is endemic in this country. The diet industry is more profitable than the oil companies. Why? Because the way we eat and prepare our food practically guarantees that we'll overeat. Psychologists tell us that we overeat because our souls are hungry. But in reality, our bodies are hungry, even though we may feel full. When you start giving your body the nutrients it craves, overeating will cease.

Eating raw foods is a boost to your metabolism as well. It takes a little more energy to digest raw foods, but it's a healthy process. Rather than spending energy to rid itself of toxins produced by cooking food, the body uses its energy to feed every cell, sending vitamins, fluids, enzymes and oxygen to make your body the efficient machine it was intended to be.

You'll naturally stop overeating, because your body and brain will no longer be starving for the nutrients they need. A starving brain will trigger the thoughts that make you overeat. The brain and the rest of your body don't need quantity; they need quality.



Raw Food and Skin Health

What's the largest organ in your body? It's your skin! It provides a protective covering for the other organs of the body. It changes to regulate your internal body temperature. And it's a good indicator of overall health and well-being.

People spend thousands of dollars on skin preparations to make your skin look vibrant and glowing. They're all topical products – products that we put on top of our skin. But if we spent just a fraction of the money we spend on these preparations on RAW FOODS, we'd begin to see an immediate change in the texture of our skin.

When you eat raw foods, you put more of the essential vitamins and amino acids your body needs into it. You're also adding moisture – naturally. Raw foods have a much higher moisture content than cooked foods, simply because the cooking process takes out so much essential moisture.

Your skin is a mirror of what's going on in the rest of your body. And when your organs and blood are fed the nutrition they need to function properly, that shows in your skin. Get your vitamins and moisture from foods like apples and carrots. When you do, then phrases like “inner beauty” and “inner glow” will be applied to YOU. Your skin is what's presented to the rest of the world and healthy, glowing skin makes the best first impression.

When you start adding raw foods to your diet, things will just naturally fall into place. You'll feel better. You'll look better. People will react to you more positively. You'll have so much more energy for your work, your friends, and your family. And this kind of energy is a self-perpetuating thing. You don't need self-help books and expensive moisturizers and plastic surgery. When your body and skin are getting their essential nutrition with raw, uncooked foods, you'll look and feel your best, **NATURALLY!**

Skin tone drinking water, coconut milk, etc.

The best way to have healthy, glowing skin is to start from the inside out. Eliminating caffeine in the form of coffee and soda is one way to start. Caffeine dehydrates the body and skin. And lack of moisture is a sure way to create lines and wrinkles. It's also a diuretic, causing increased urine output, again depleting your body and skin of the moisture it needs. We try to combat this with moisturizers, but the better way is to put the moisture INTO your body, not on it.

Drinking pure water, unprocessed fruit juices or coconut milk will give your body and skin the hydration it needs. The colors in fruit juices are the colors of the earth and these colors will reflect themselves in warm and healthy skin tones.

The overall effects of caffeine on your body will manifest themselves in your skin. Heavy caffeine drinkers can experience osteoporosis, headaches, depression, sleeplessness. These can all be reflected in your skin.

When you replace colas, coffee and teas made with boiling water with water, fruit juices "sun tea" and coconut milk, you'll soon start to feel better and sleep better. Your skin will reflect the good health of all the organs and cells of your body, once you've kicked the caffeine habit.

Another reason for drinking pure water, juices and "sun tea" is that when you boil water, you're releasing oxygen from it. When the body rids itself of toxins, it passes through the skin which is the largest elimination organ. Raw food increases your detoxification rate. Drinking water helps the body rid itself of toxins. Seaweed is high in vitamins and minerals beneficial to the skin and also helps rid the body of toxins.

To achieve a healthy complexion, drink plenty of water and eat plenty of raw food. What goes into your body is reflective in your overall appearance.

Raw food, less water

When you start eating more raw foods, you may find you're not as thirsty or don't need as much water or other beverages as you normally do. There are several reasons for this.

First of all, raw foods, such as raw fruits and vegetables have a higher volume of water in them, so your body is getting the hydration it needs from foods.

This doesn't mean you should stop drinking water or juices. You don't want to adopt some of the more radical elements of the raw food trend. First and foremost, listen to your body. It will tell you what it needs. If you're overweight, sluggish, tired, depressed, your body might be telling you to make some dietary changes, and raw foods might be one way to alleviate some physical disorders.

But if you're overweight and have symptoms of Type II diabetes, overwhelming thirst can be one symptom. When you start consuming more raw foods, with a higher fiber and moisture content, you may start to lose weight, and that can go a long way to reducing your blood sugars.

If you're not overweight, or don't have Type II diabetes, you still might find you're not as thirsty as you normally are. First of all, if you're drinking water and juices, you're not consuming caffeine, which is so dehydrating and makes you thirstier. And by not consuming as much in the way of cooked foods or especially highly processed foods, which have astronomical sodium counts, you won't be as thirsty either.

By consuming more raw, uncooked food, and pure water and fruit juices, you're putting your body into balance. Keeping sodium to normal levels found in foods means you'll start to require a more balanced amount of water. Don't think of this as changing or taking away. Think of it as adding balance, and it will make the process of eating healthier much easier.

Why not processed foods?

Have you ever seen a picture of your blood plasma after you've eaten a meal from McDonald's or Burger King? It's not a pretty picture. It looks thick and cloudy. Fast foods are loaded with fat and sodium. They use white bread and rolls, which means they've used white processed flour, with very few nutrients in them.

And how do you feel after a Big Mac and french fries? You need a nap, don't you? All that fat will drag you down and make you feel sluggish.

Going on a diet is hard, but think about some of the things you do when you go on a diet. You eliminate those high fat, processed, high-sodium foods. You eat less, true. But you also eat more raw fruits and vegetables. You drink water. And the results of eating this way are increased energy, less need for sleep. Processed foods, with their high fat content are hard to digest. They take an enormous amount of the body's energy to consume. When your body's energy isn't used up digesting all that fat, it's available for YOU – for work, play, love, exercise – in other words, for LIFE.

These aren't drastic concepts. You don't have to make drastic changes in your lifestyle. But take a good look at what you consume without even thinking about it. We reach for the potato chips, or stop at McDonald's or Taco Bell when we're hungry and we want something in a hurry.

It's much easier these days to have snacks on hand so you don't have to stop at a fast food place when you're hungry. If you're on the road a lot, and get hungry, pick up a bag of vegetables or apple slices at a grocery store. Yes, it's easier to drive up to Wendy's, but taking a few extra minutes, not to mention a few extra steps, will be well worth it in energy and vitality.

Vegetarian compared to raw

Is there a difference between vegetarian and raw food diets? A raw foodist is a vegetarian, but one who generally is not going to cook his vegetables or fruits. A vegetarian is someone who simply doesn't eat meat, fish or poultry, but only consumes vegetables, pasta, and rice. A vegetarian might eat meatless spaghetti sauce or order onion rings in a restaurant. (Not the healthiest choice, but sometimes it's hard to find something to eat in a restaurant if you're vegetarian – even harder if you're a raw foodist.)

There are different categories of vegetarians, like vegans, or fruitarians, and raw foodist is a category of vegetarianism. We haven't seen anything about sushi being considered a raw food, but it is. Raw food, though, generally means eating raw, uncooked fruits, vegetables, dried fruits, seaweeds, etc.

But to be a raw food purist means raw broccoli, not steamed. To a vegetarian, someone committed to not eat meat or fish or animal products, steamed vegetables are just as good, although everyone would agree that steaming can take out nutrients from foods, rendering them less nutritious. A vegetarian might consume dairy or egg products; however a vegan will not consume any animal products at all. And a raw foodist is a vegan who consumes only uncooked, unprocessed raw foods.

Proponents of the raw diet believe that enzymes are the life force of a food and that every food contains its own perfect mix. These enzymes help us digest foods completely, without relying on our body to produce its own cocktail of digestive enzymes.

It is also thought that the cooking process destroys vitamins and minerals and that cooked foods not only take longer to digest, but they also allow partially digested fats, proteins and carbohydrates to clog up our gut and arteries.

Followers of a raw diet cite numerous health benefits, including:

- Increased energy levels.
- Improved appearance of skin.
- Improved digestion.
- Weight loss.
- Reduced risk of heart disease.

Raw only?

A diet is considered a raw food diet if it consists of at least 75% raw, uncooked fruits, vegetables, sprouts, etc. Raw and living foods are believed to contain essential food enzymes (living foods contain a higher enzyme content than cooked foods). The cooking process (i.e., heating foods above 116°F) is thought to destroy food enzymes.

People who follow the raw diet use particular techniques to prepare foods. These include sprouting seeds, grains and beans; soaking nuts and dried fruits; and juicing fruits and vegetables. The only cooking that is allowed is via a dehydrator. This piece of equipment blows hot air through the food but never reaches a temperature higher than 116°F.

Do you have to follow the regimen that strictly? Of course not. But it's certainly worth it to incorporate some of these techniques and ideas into your diet. If you tend to snack at work, try taking in carrots or apple slices. Many of the bigger grocery stores now offer packaged vegetables or fruits that make it easier to pack them and take them to work. We're a nation of convenience, and much of the resistance to healthier eating is that it does generally take a little more effort and time to buy and slice fruits and vegetables. Food retailers have been catching on, slowly, and it's much easier now to get bags of sliced carrots, celery, apples, nuts and raisins.

Of course these aren't necessarily organic foods, and organic is the better way to go, but we think anything raw is infinitely better than cooked, processed food. If you have the time, do buy organic and slice them yourself. But if you're in a hurry, and nowhere near a natural food store, then don't beat yourself up or sabotage your efforts because you can't do this 100% all the time. That's not realistic. Anything from the fruit and vegetable aisle is going to be better for you than a potato chip, or worse yet, a french fry!

Fruitarian

You've probably been hearing a lot about the value of a raw foods diet. A raw food diet consists primarily of uncooked, unprocessed fruits, vegetables, sprouts, seaweed, nuts and juices. It's a vegetarian diet, but one that rejects any animal products. Its central tenet is that cooking and processing take out the majority of essential vitamins, enzymes and nutrients that our bodies evolved to thrive on.

Fruitarianism, as the word implies, eat primarily fruits, with nuts and grains as well. A fruitarian diet also includes foods like tomatoes or avocados, which are fruits.

Fruit is nourishing and refreshing for your health. It doesn't clog the body's vital arteries; better still, it actually flushes and cleanses. A fruit diet also lightens our bodies and spirits, in line with the general lightening of our planetary vibration rate which many higher sources tell us is taking place at this time. You need to eat carefully if you choose a fruitarian diet, because it can be more of a challenge to get enough essential protein in your diet. A fruitarian eats nothing which has been killed or stolen. That supplants meat, dairy, and plants with the thousands of fruit and nut combinations on the planet. E.g., a fruitarian can eat an avocado sandwich, a coconut milk shake or the purest coconut ice cream made from the milk and meat of the fruit, veggie burgers made of lentil or bean paste or tofu, a succotash of corn, limas, peas, and tomatoes, sweets made with pure maple syrup or date sugar, pecan pies made with fruit sugars, fruit shakes made of a mixture of orange and banana, pear and peach, pomegranate, papaya, and plum. A pizza of tofu, tomato, and pepper (not pepperoni), salads of tomato, cucumber, green and red peppers (but not lettuce, cabbage, or celery), nut butters such as almond butter or tahini, hummus {chickpea paste}. In other words, fruitarian may eat fruits 99.9% of the time, but occasionally do indulge in the delicacies of other food groups.

Sproutarian

Vegetarianism and raw food enthusiasts fall into many different groups with different theories of what kind of natural foods are best. Most vegetarians eat fruits, vegetables, nuts and grains. Vegans eat no animal by-products at all, including dairy or eggs. Fruitarians eat primarily fruits. And some vegetarians eat only sprouts.

Sprouts are very nutritious because they contain all the elements a plant needs for life and growth. The endosperm of seed is the storehouse of carbohydrates, protein and oil. When the seed germinates, these become predigested amino acids and natural sugars upon which the plant embryo feeds to grow. This life force we eat is filled with energy which is capable of generating cells of the body and supplying us with new vigor and life. For this reason sprouts can retard the ageing process.

Sprouts contain goodly amounts of male and female hormones, as well, in their most easily assimilated form. Research shows that sprouts are among the highest food in vitamins. They are not only a low cost food but are also tasty and easy to grow. Children and the elderly can make sprouting a profitable hobby. All of us can profit from the boost to health they provide.

Almost any seed, grain or legume can be sprouted though some are tastier than others. You may try mung beans, alfalfa, wheat, peas, fenugreek, chickpeas, radish, fennel, celery seed, etc. These are most readily found in natural food stores. Remember to soak small seeds only for 4 hours and beans for 15 hours. You also can mix these seeds. Get a 2 liter wide-mouth jar and a piece of cheesecloth or old nylon stocking to fasten as a cover with a rubber band.

Put seed into the jar as follows:

2 Tsp alfalfa, 2 Tsp radish or fenugreek, 1/4 cup lentils, 1/2 cup mung beans. Soak these seeds for 15 hours and drain the water. Afterwards rinse and drain well twice daily for about 3-5 days. If you wish to make larger amounts of sprouts, so you may share with others, place 2 cups of mixed seed into a large porcelain pot, in the bottom of which holes have been drilled for easy rinsing. Simply place underneath the faucet and rinse morning and evening with warm water. Cover with a plate. The seeds grow beautifully and abundantly in a few days.

Juicearian

Many people have heard of juice fasts as a means of detoxifying the body. Followers of a raw foods regimen also include juices as part of their nutrition. Nearly anything can be juiced – fruits and vegetables, primarily. It's a form of concentrated nutrition. Some raw foodists drink only fresh fruit juices.

In addition, fruit and vegetable juices are good sources of the traditional nutrients. Citrus fruits (grapefruit, oranges, etc.) provide a healthy portion of vitamin C. Carrot juice contains large quantities of vitamin A, in the form of beta carotene. A number of green juices are a good source of vitamin E. Fruit juices are a good source of essential minerals like iron, copper, potassium, sodium, iodine, and magnesium, which are bound by the plant in a form that is most easily assimilated during digestion.

While fruit and vegetable juices are the most common form of juice, wheatgrass juice has been getting a lot of attention lately because of the denseness of nutrients it contains.

The primary advantage of truly fresh wheatgrass juice - juice made from raw, live, soil-grown wheat grass, is the apparent high level of life force energy that it contains. It is one of the few truly fresh foods available (sprouts are another). The grass is alive and growing right up to the time it is juiced, and hopefully you are drinking it within a few minutes or so of juicing. Most of us get our green veggies from markets, and they were picked days ago and refrigerated - losing vitality the whole time. (It is an even worse situation for fruit, which may be picked weeks before you eat it, and in some cases, held in cold storage for months - losing vitality the whole time.) In contrast, one can grow wheatgrass indoors, and enjoy it when it is truly fresh.

In conclusion, drinking plenty of fresh fruit juices daily will cleanse your system, make you feel completely energized and last but not least, you will look beautiful. People will wonder what you are doing differently!

Raw nourishment

You might agree on an intellectual level that eating raw foods is a good idea. But does the thought of abandoning a lifetime of eating habits for the sake of what seems like a good idea seem like more than you can do?

So don't! That's silly and the surest way to guarantee you won't even give a raw foods diet a fighting chance. "Everything in moderation" and we think that applies to even the healthiest notions. It's not healthy if you won't do it!

Don't think of trying a raw foods diet as taking anything AWAY. Try adding them in. We think if you add in things like raw vegetables, sprouts, fruits and juices, you won't be as hungry and when you're not hungry, you won't give into impulsive eating. If you want that steak, or even a McDonald's hamburger, plan for it and enjoy it. Once you start eating raw foods though, and notice how good you feel on them and how much more energy you have, that hamburger just won't look as good to you.

You do want to be sure though, that you're getting enough of the right kinds of nutrition. Eating raw foods doesn't mean eating only the raw foods you like. Watermelon is good for you, but it's not enough. The same with most foods. You'll need to do a little research into which raw foods have the essential proteins, or what combinations of food you need to eat to get enough protein. Raw food eating is intended to nourish your body in a completely different way, but just being raw isn't enough. You want to do this to be in balance, and you need to balance the raw foods you're eating for proper nutrition.

One way to ensure that you are getting enough nutrients is to incorporate a new vegetable every week. Buy something you have never heard of, like a "leek", or "swiss chard." You will find a whole new world of tastes and textures open up to you. You will feel more and more deterred by fast food. I guarantee it.

Junk food

Try this, just for the heck of it. Once you've started incorporating raw foods into your food plans, keep adding them in and reducing the number of cooked and processed foods from your diet. Especially things like fast food, chips, cookies and snacks.

After you've done that for awhile, have a junk food day. If you really miss your junk food, or think you do, then plan for it. Make it truly memorable and junk-worthy. If we were gambling types, we'd be willing to bet a LOT of money that mid-way through your junk food day, you'll stop.

Once you've started incorporating raw foods into your diet, and getting most of your nutrition from them, and stayed with it for at least a week, junk food is just not going to have the same appeal to you. Because now you're thinking about what you're putting into your body. And if you really think about what junk food does to your body, all of a sudden it doesn't look so good.

You know, it just happens naturally. We've started eating more and more raw foods in our home, and haven't been able to touch things like chicken or a hamburger in ages. First of all, we really feel pretty strongly about not eating animals. But have you ever read the warnings about handling chicken that you've bought in the grocery store? Or ground meat? It's recommended that you wash your counters with BLEACH if you've prepared meat on them. Now, do you really want to put something in your body that requires BLEACH to clean the germs from it off of surfaces in your home? Nope, when we see chicken now, all we see is germs. And there's no flavor to it anyway. So why bother?

And other junk food we used to love just doesn't appeal to us any more. Nachos and cheese? Well, the cheese you use is so processed, it's nothing but corn syrup and processed cheese and fats and chemicals. We can feel our arteries grinding to a halt just looking at it. We don't even use dips for our vegetables any more. We really do enjoy the taste of vegetables and fruits all by themselves.

Cooked foods on a raw diet

Does moving to a raw foods diet mean never eating hot food again? No, it doesn't. Sometimes you want something hot. Hot food has always signified comfort for many of us. And on a cold, rainy day, carrot sticks or wheatgrass juice probably won't cut it for most of us.

Most raw food, like our bodies, is very perishable. When raw foods are exposed to temperatures above 118 degrees, they start to rapidly break down, just as our bodies would if we had a fever that high. One of the constituents of foods which can break down are enzymes. Enzymes help us digest our food. Enzymes are proteins though, and they have a very specific 3-dimensional structure in space. Once they are heated much above 118 degrees, this structure can change.

Once enzymes are exposed to heat, they are no longer able to provide the function for which they were designed. Cooked foods contribute to chronic illness, because their enzyme content is damaged and thus requires us to make our own enzymes to process the food. The digestion of cooked food uses valuable metabolic enzymes in order to help digest your food. Digestion of cooked food demands much more energy than the digestion of raw food. In general, raw food is so much more easily digested that it passes through the digestive tract in 1/2 to 1/3 of the time it takes for cooked food.

Eating enzyme-dead foods places a burden on your pancreas and other organs and overworks them, which eventually exhausts these organs. Many people gradually impair their pancreas and progressively lose the ability to digest their food after a lifetime of ingesting processed foods.

But you certainly can steam and blanch foods if you want your food at least warm. Use a food thermometer and cook them no higher than 118 degrees Fahrenheit. Up to this temperature, you won't be doing too much damage to the enzymes in food.

Eat raw up until dinnertime

Are you interested in a raw food diet, but don't think you can do it all the time? You don't have to, certainly not to start. Many of us are conditioned to think of food as reward and comfort. We look forward to the end of the day, having dinner with our families, or going out to dinner with friends.

Try eating raw foods throughout the day. If you go to work every day, take carrots, apples, grapes or dried fruit with you to munch on. If you usually go out to lunch during the day, try to go places where you can get a salad. If you pack a lunch, include sprouts and fruit with it. Steamed brown rice and vegetables and a little fruit might not sound very interesting, but it's a good energy lunch. If you're like many people, those fast food lunches make you want to crawl under your desk and take a nap in the afternoon! They make you sluggish and tired. A lighter lunch of raw foods can keep you energized throughout the day.

The business culture is different these days, and there's less of a routine than there used to be with a morning "coffee break" and then "lunch hour" and an afternoon "break." That routine doesn't work for a lot of people any more, but you can still get hungry during the day. By taking a variety of raw foods with you to work, you can munch periodically during the day. Sometimes it's better to eat to avoid getting hungry. If we let ourselves go too long until we get ravenous, that's when it's easier to make poor food choices. Eating raw foods periodically throughout the day also keeps your metabolism humming along, and keeps your blood sugar at steady levels.

Organic Products and Raw Food Diet

Fortunately for those of us newly interested in eating organic and raw foods, there are lots of products out there. Natural and organic foods used to be found only in natural food stores, and those could be few and far between. While not as ubiquitous as McDonald's, there ARE many more stand-alone stores. And the grocery chains are catching on too, with more organic selections than ever before. If you don't see them in your grocery store, just ask. You're probably not the only person in your neighborhood who'd like to see more of these options.

Many grocery stores now feature sprouts and other living foods in the produce aisle. Of course, if they don't, there's nothing easier to grow for yourself than sprouts!

There are also tons of sites on the Web where you can order raw and living foods. Just do a search on raw foods and you'll come up with a lot of different places to order the foods you'd like to buy. Many of these sites are also full of useful information, to help you learn about eating raw foods, and help educate you on the specific food values.

What else? Experiment with what you like. Take the time to learn a little about what the different nutrients in foods do for you. A few examples:

Cabbage – High in Vitamin C; important for healthy cell function

Shitake mushrooms – contain essential fatty acids and antioxidants to support a healthy immune system

Kale – Rich in fiber and helps reduce calorie intake with less hunger. We like that!

Barley – Loaded with niacin, fiber and iron and is important for healthy blood sugar.

Pumpkin – So rich in fiber and vitamins; helps reduce appetite by filling the stomach with indigestible fibers.

Why organic

Food that is grown or raised without chemical pesticides or chemical fertilizers is called “organic.” We’ve become so accustomed to getting by with foods that have been grown with fertilizers and that contain harmful toxins, that we’ve forgotten what it’s like to feel truly “well.” We don’t know how good we can really feel.

Why else would you choose to eat organic food? We pay a lot in terms of flavor and nutrition to eat perfect-looking food. Yes, organic food might have an occasional bruise on its flesh – but so does food that’s been sprayed with harmful chemicals. Organic food, though, are generally fresher and more flavorful. Many times, they’re grown locally, so they haven’t been stored or refrigerated. Consider the difference in flavor between a vine-ripened tomato and a regular tomato. There’s just no comparison.

The body has to process everything you put into it and eliminate what it cannot digest. If your food contains toxins in the form of chemical pesticides and fertilizers, your body has to figure out a way to get rid of the toxins. When the body cannot get rid of toxins fast enough, it stores them until it has time to eliminate them. This can lead to many health problems. Many of the pesticides used in farming have been found to be carcinogenic. Reducing your exposure to these toxins can improve your health. True, some people eliminate toxins well. Still, the body needs to expend energy to eliminate toxins when it could be doing other things such as healing damaged cells, fighting off viruses and bacteria, or patrolling the body for cancer cells. Even people who can tolerate or eliminate toxins could feel substantially better without putting these poisons into their bodies. And if your system is sensitive to toxins, you’ll be much better off eliminating them from your diet as much as possible. Fortunately, it’s easier to do this because there’s a greater selection and variety of organic produce in our grocery stores.

Dehydrate fruits

One of the problems facing anyone trying to eat healthier, especially for someone trying to move towards eating more raw foods is the convenience factor. Raw and natural foods are so much healthier for you, but it's not as if there are drive-through raw foods restaurants on every street corner in the country.

And of course, there's no such thing as a raw foods snack machine, is there? So if you get hungry during the day, you're going to have a challenge of finding something appropriate to eat if you haven't packed any raw fruits and vegetables. And when you're rushing around in the morning, sometimes it's next to impossible to find the time to put together a selection of healthy snacks to take with you.

One thing to try so that you have healthy snacks available quickly is to dehydrate your fruits or make fruit leathers. Those fruit roll-ups you see in the grocery store are derived from a pretty good idea – fruit leathers. But it's better to make your own – commercial fruit leathers are going to be loaded with preservatives and sugars – just the things you want to avoid.

When you're switching to a raw foods diet, that doesn't always have to mean fresh off the farm. It means not cooking foods with processes that strip all the essential vitamins, amino acids and enzymes from them. Drying fruit is a great way to add variety to your diet and make yourself tasty snacks of dried fruit or fruit leathers. It's not hard to do. There are recipes and inexpensive food dehydrators on the Web. These are also great snacks to pack for your kids' lunches!

You get all the benefit of the raw fruit, just packaged and preserved in a healthy, nutritious way!

Can you feed your children raw food?

Every mother wants the best for her child. You want your child to look healthy, grow proportionately, feel energized and have a great immune system. So, why do most parents in America feed their children junk food by the time they start eating table food? Why do most restaurants serve French fries or macaroni and cheese for side orders and not steamed broccoli? It is really a sad situation to watch young children who are obese. Even schools offer peanut butter and jelly or ice cream for lunch.

To ensure that your child is eating correctly you must feed them plenty of fruits and vegetables. But the trick is to make it delicious and fun. For instance, for breakfast, arrange a platter of fruit, oranges, grapefruit, bananas, strawberries, blueberries, they will love it! Make faces out of the fruit. Have them drink only water and no sugar 100% fruit juice that you juice yourself. Get them used to eating vegetables that are uncooked. Whenever they get hungry, offer small baby carrots, or celery, they will grow to love the taste just the way it is. You can introduce a new vegetable each week and learn how to hide it into your food. For instance, chop up Portobello mushrooms in a chopper and add it to your pasta sauce and watch them gobble it up, barely noticing the mushrooms. Make blanched broccoli (plain) and eat that for dinner. If they see you eating healthy, they will learn early on to eat that way. Do not let them eat packaged foods, such as macaroni and cheese, or fried chicken fingers, or anything fried for that matter. Make sure that they eat vegetables at every meal and be careful when you go out to eat.

Offer natural desserts that you have made at home, such as homemade sorbet, or fruit smoothie, or peach cobbler pie (all natural). Stay away from cakes, cookies, etc that have preservatives and other unnatural flavorings. Make it yourself and offer it occasionally. You will find that they watch you and what you eat and if you incorporate a much healthier menu, so will they.

The best part of raising your children to learn to love fruits and vegetables is that you will notice that they will turn down junk food when you are not around. At that point you will know that you have done your part in raising healthy adults.

Why go “raw”?

So, now that you know what a raw food diet is all about, you need to decide, is it right for you?

Well you do not need to incorporate raw food 100% of the time.

You can just eat more fruits and vegetables and no processed foods.

Try drinking fruit juices until lunch time and then eating a healthy veggie sandwich. For dinner, eat some blanched vegetables with a cooked meal with no meats.

When you gradually detoxify your body, you will see dramatic results.

First, you will go through the detoxify process, where you will feel tired, have headaches, skin eruptions, etc.

Once you are over this tough time, you will feel light, not dragged down, energetic, vitality, and conscious, among other things.

You will have more mental clarity and therefore be more productive.

Your body will feel cleansed, you will be able to treat disease and prevent new ones from forming.

You will see a dramatic weight loss, for instance five pounds a week.

You will also notice that you do not seem weighed down with colds or sicknesses because your immune system is much stronger.

You will be saving money because you can either grow your vegetables or buy them at a farmers market.

Buying organic food will save the earth and provide agricultural support, which is much needed.

You will also save time and money because you will not be in the kitchen cooking up a storm.

You will not be eating animals, because these animals have been pumped with high hormones and that wouldn't benefit you anyway, but instead toxify you.

This in turn, puts an end to the torture in animal farming.

You will not be plagued with depression, pms, or acne.

In fact, your skin will be absolutely glowing, you will feel rejuvenated.

This type of eating also slows the aging process.

Your senses will be enhanced; you will be more flexible and fertile.

You will be more creative, motivated, and also relaxed.

You will focus more on relationships and be more environmentally attuned and inwardly attuned.

What you will notice is an amazing spiritual awakening that you have never experienced before because you have changed your vibrations to a higher level capable of clearer thought patterns.

Conclusion

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