

Enzyme Supplements to Spark Up Your Life



Western eating habits have changed substantially over the past 50 years. At one time, people lived primarily on food they grew or gathered locally. Much of this food was eaten raw or was fermented for preservation. (See Sidebar “Should I Eat Everything Raw?”) Traditional diets were not only more nutritionally dense (i.e., had higher levels of vitamins and minerals), they were also richer in natural enzymes.

Today, almost all the food we eat has been baked, fried, boiled, steamed, pasteurized, microwaved or otherwise cooked. Unfortunately, this cooking and processing destroys many nutrients, including vitamins and enzymes. Enzymes are inactivated in water that is heated above 118 degrees. They are also deactivated with a dry heat of just 150 degrees. (For reference, remember that water boils at 212 degrees at sea level.) This is unfortunate, because this lack of enzymes in our diet results in a lot of unnecessary stress on one’s digestive system.

Amazing Enzymes

Enzymes are molecules, composed of amino acids (the building blocks of protein), which are created by all living organisms. Enzymes are the catalysts for all the metabolic processes of life. Since the 1930’s, over 5,000 enzymes have been discovered in nature, with over 3,000 found in the human body.

There are three basic kinds of enzymes as follows.

Plant Enzymes. This first group consists of the enzymes we get from our diet when we eat fresh, raw food or consume fermented foods. These enzymes have an enzyme-sparing effect on the body because they take stress off our digestive tract by partially digesting food for us. Plant enzymes have also been shown to have beneficial effects such as reducing inflammation and enhancing immunity.

Digestive Enzymes. These are the enzymes released by glands in the mouth, stomach and intestines to break down (digest) the food we eat. This second kind of enzymes break down starches and complex sugars into simple sugars, fats into fatty acids and proteins into amino acids.

Metabolic Enzymes. This is a third class of enzymes which regulates numerous chemical reactions in the body. Metabolic enzymes take sugars, fatty acids and amino acids and reassemble them into hormones, neurotransmitters, cell membranes and other components the body needs. Metabolic enzymes are also used to break down substances the body no longer needs, such as excess hormones, metabolic by-products or toxins.

When food is not properly digested, it can begin to rot in the digestive tract—proteins putrefy and fruits and vegetables ferment. The result is ingestion, gas, bloating, bad-breath and body odor. These toxic by-products of poor digestion cause inflammation in the colon and weaken our immune system.

Enzyme production that could be utilized for other purposes is diverted to try to deal with the toxic overload. This results in depleted energy throughout the body and can lead to chronic pain and illnesses like arthritis and hardening of the arteries.

Supplementing with enzymes to replace those missing from the diet can have far-reaching benefits on health. Among other things, enzyme therapy can:

- Enhance digestion
- Promote weight loss
- Reduce allergic reactions
- Detoxify the body
- Enhance immunity
- Decongest lymphatics
- Ease pain
- Increase energy

That’s a pretty impressive list of benefits for one supplement. So, to help you choose the enzyme supplement (or supplements) that are right for you, here’s some information on some of the valuable enzyme supplements available for our use.

Proactazyme Plus

For most people, Proactazyme Plus is the best enzyme supplement to take. It contains the plant-based enzymes that are missing from our modern diets. It contains enzymes that assist the body in breaking down all three major types of foodstuffs—proteases to break down protein, lipases for fats and amylases for carbohydrates. It also contains enzymes that break down the complex sugars in beans and vegetables that cause intestinal gas. The formula also contains herbs that stimulate natural digestive functions, including: beet root, caraway seed, fennel, gentian, dandelion root.

Food Enzymes

For more serious digestive problems, Food Enzymes are a better choice. This formula supplies the digestive secretions and enzymes normally produced by the human body to break down food. It contains hydrochloric acid and pepsin (secreted by the stomach to break down proteins), bile salts (secreted by the gall bladder to emulsify fats) and pancreatic enzymes (which break down fats, proteins and carbohydrates). The blend also contains bromelain, an enzyme from pineapples, and papain, an enzyme from papayas, both of which help to break down proteins.

Food Enzymes is particularly helpful for elderly people whose digestive systems often produce less digestive fluids and enzymes. It is also beneficial for people who are suffering from chronic illness and “wasting” because they are having a difficult time absorbing nutrients.

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