Should I Eat Everything Raw?

When some people learn about enzymes, they draw the erroneous conclusion that everything we eat should be raw and that all cooked food is bad. This isn't really true.

Traditional diets did incorporate raw foods, but they also contained cooked foods. Because human beings lack the enzyme cellulase (which breaks down the cellulose in grass and other vegetables), it is difficult for the human digestive system to break down many plant foods. Steaming or stir-frying these vegetables breaks down the cell walls and makes these nutrients available to us.

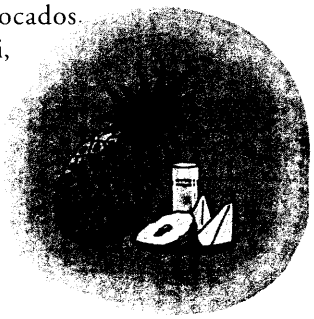
Also, nuts, grains, beans and other seeds contain enzyme inhibitors. This is why seeds and nuts can remain viable for many years (sometimes hundreds or even thousands of years). The enzyme inhibitors are preventing premature breakdown of nutrients. These foods must be soaked or "sprouted" in order to deactivate the enzyme inhibitors and activate their enzymes. Seeds and nuts are not "alive" as there's no enzymatic activity. Soaking or sprouting nuts, grains and seeds before eating will make available the enzymes needed to digest these nutritious foods.

Fermented Foods

Traditional cultures where a lot of cooked foods were eaten typically supplemented their enzymes with cultured foods. This provided natural enzyme supplementation for their diets. Cultured dairy products, such as unpasteurized yoghurt, cheese and kefir, supply both probiotics (friendly bacteria) and additional enzymes. Other fermented foods which supply both probiotics and enzymes include cultured soy foods (miso, Natto), pickled vegetables (sauerkraut, cucumbers, Kim Chi), naturally fermented beverages, fermented fish and sourdough bread.

Unfortunately, in modern society most of these pickles, sauerkraut, fermented beverages (beers and wine), etc. are cooked or pasteurized after the fermentation process, which destroys both the probiotics and the enzymes. This increases shelf life, but destroys many of the benefits traditional societies derived from these foods. Fortunately, many health food stores sell "raw" fermented products which are enzyme-rich. You can also learn to make your own or take enzyme supplements.

Many fresh foods also supplement enzymes and will help to digest cooked foods. Foods that are excellent sources of plant enzymes include avocados, bananas, dates, figs, grapes, kiwi, mango, papaya, pineapple as well as extra virgin olive oil and raw honey. Eating these foods in an un-pasteurized and un-processed form will aid in proper digestion and absorption.



Papaya Mint Tablets

This blend contains papaya, a fruit containing the enzyme papain which breaks down protein. It also contains the essential oil of peppermint, which is traditionally used for gas and indigestion. Sweetened with fructose and sorbitol, these tasty, chewable tablets will help to relieve acid indigestion, acid reflux, belching, bloating, gas, heartburn and poor digestion. They are a safe enzyme remedy, even for children, and make excellent natural breath mints, too.

Digestive Bitters

This isn't an enzyme formula, but it is a blend that will stimulate your own body's enzyme secretions and digestive fluids. Liquid bitters have traditionally been used to settle digestive upset and stimulate the appetite. Taken about 15 minutes prior to meals, it will increase the flow of digestive secretions and stimulate appetite. Taken after the meal, it will settle digestive upset and enhance fat and protein metabolism.

Protease and PDA

When people have specific problems with breaking down proteins, there are three products that may be helpful. **PDA Combination** supplies bentaine hydrochloric acid (HCl) and pepsin, the digestive secretions produced by the stomach to break down proteins. As we age, HCl production tends to diminish, making this a very good supplement for the elderly.

Protease enzymes, which break down protein, are also available in two potencies, Protease Plus and High Potency Protease. High Potency Protease is about three times stronger than Protease Plus. These supplements are very beneficial for people with poor protein metabolism, food allergies and immune problems. Taken between meals, they can help rid the intestines of parasites and assist the body in fighting cancer. Caution: Protein-digesting aids should not be taken with gastric ulcers or by those with blood-clotting disorders.

Other Digestive Enzymes

If you suffer from gas after drinking milk or eating dairy foods like ice cream, you may be lactose intolerant. Lactose is a sugar found in milk that requires the lactase enzyme to digest. **Lactase**

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Additional Help and Information

If you would like more information about using enzymes to improve your health, talk to the person who gave you this newsletter. They have additional handouts and resource materials to help you. You can also consult some of the following sources:

Enzyme Nutrition, The Food Enzyme Concept by Edwar Howell.

Enzymes, The Spark of Life DVD featuring Steven Horne.

Food Enzymes, The Missing Link to Radiant Health by Humbart Santillo.

The Healing Power of Enzymes by DicQie Fuller.

The Comprehensive Guide to Nature's Sunshine Products by Tree of Light Publishing.