

Natural Health News

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EVERGREEN SPA & WELLNESS
ELY, MN

ENZYME-RICH FOODS

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Monday-Saturday

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Eating foods in sync with the season, especially foods grown locally, maximizes nutrient intake and minimizes one's environmental footprint. The bounty of summer blesses us with nutrient-rich foods, especially vibrantly colored fruits and vegetables, many of which can be enjoyed raw. Raw, enzyme-packed foods are a little slice of heaven for your pancreas and here is why. There are two main categories of enzymes involved in breaking down food: those inherent in plants and raw animal products, and those produced by the body. The make-up of each whole food is no accident. Nature provides the necessary enzymes for that particular food, so avocados have a higher proportion of lipase to break down fat, while pears contain more amylase to work on their higher carbohydrate concentration. Digestive enzymes are produced by the body to further assist in the breakdown of food. The first digestive enzyme food comes in contact with is amylase in saliva, which begins to break down carbohydrates through chewing (a key reason to chew food slowly and thoroughly). The remaining digestive, or pancreatic, enzymes are produced in the pancreas and secreted into the gastrointestinal tract to continue the job of digestion. The last group of enzymes to work on our meal is produced by the small intestine itself, which mostly concentrates on carbohydrates. Although our body makes digestive enzymes, their production diminishes with age. Food enzymes—and only food enzymes—spare the pancreas from having to compensate for inadequate predigesting. In other words, consuming a predominately "enzymeless" diet, of over-cooked foods taxes the pancreas and, eventually, it will become less efficient at enzyme production. Even though raw foods are healthful, three factors must be considered when including them in the diet. First, when examining traditional practices, most foods were cooked—particularly grains, legumes and vegetables. Second, certain foods are just best cooked, fermented or germinated to maximize nutrients availability and absorption. And third, an individual's digestive system must be up to the task of breaking down raw foods, which is often not the case. Persons with weaker digestive function often have trouble assimilating raw foods—particularly those highest in fiber—and can suffer from gas, bloating and intestinal discomfort. This is especially the case for those with digestive conditions such as colitis, IBS, and gastric reflux. Grains, beans, nuts and seeds are foods that should not be consumed raw. They house enzyme-inhibitors that are best de-activated by germinating or sprouting, which wakes up the enzymes, ultimately making the food's nutrients more readily available.

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This is accomplished by soaking these foods in room temperature water for 8 to 24 hours before either cooking grains or beans or drying nuts and seeds in a low-temperature oven or dehydrator to make them crispy. Fermented foods, such as sauerkraut, beet kvass, kombucha, chutneys, yogurt, etc. are “super-raw” but they contain very high levels of enzymes which are formed during lacto-fermentation that more than compensate for the enzymes destroyed by cooking. Fermentation also has the added benefit of pre-digesting the food and making for easier overall digestion. Some vegetables are always best consumed cooked or fermented. Especially those in the cruciferous family—broccoli, cauliflower, all cabbages, kale, mustard greens, rutabaga and turnips, etc. These highly nutritious foods contain goitrogenic compounds that increase one’s need for iodine and, if consumed in large amounts, can inhibit thyroid function. Therefore, they are always best consumed cooked or fermented. Cooking and fermenting also reduces naturally occurring mineral-blocking substances in plant foods, such as phytates, oxalates and mycotoxins. Oxalates, for instance, are naturally found in high concentrations in such nourishing foods as spinach, beet greens and parsley, yet they inhibit calcium absorption. In general, gently steaming, stir-frying, sauteing, slow cooking, and baking most vegetables liberates the minerals within, making them more available. However, that doesn’t mean all vegetables need to be cooked before consumption, but again, an individual’s digestive constitution and the food of choice are important factors. Take a good look at the bigger picture of your nutritional intake and serve a balance of cooked and raw foods that fits with your family’s tastes and level of digestive ability. Absorption of minerals is enhanced with the addition of fats, such as butter, avocado, healthy oils or cream. Be sure to include these ingredients liberally in all meals. While cooking some of our vegetables, and virtually all beans and grains, is ideal nutritionally, one should be aware of the concerns with over-cooking. It was discovered that upon eating processed and over-cooked foods, there was an immediate production of white blood cells—the immune system’s response when under attack, which happens with a virus or when consuming an allergenic food. Eating raw food or food heated at low temperatures fails to produce this same physiological response. It was also found that chewing food thoroughly lessens the elevation in white blood cells. Teaming up a plate of cooked food with the same amount of raw food also minimizes the blood cell response. These results affirm the traditional practice of including a fermented, super-charged enzyme food along with cooked ingredients and it proves that refined, deep-fried, and pasteurized foods inhibit immune function.

SEPTEMBER SPECIALS

Alden’s Organic—Organic Ice Cream, 48 oz. variety	30% OFF
Julie’s Organic—Organic Ice Cream Sandwich, Vanilla	30% OFF
Rising Moon Organics—Frozen Pierogi or Ravioli, 16 oz.	25% OFF
Mt. Vikos—Feta Cheese Portions or Crumbles	25% OFF
Amy & Brian—Coconut Juice, 17.5 oz. variety	30% OFF
Citrus Magic—Odor Absorber, 8 oz.	30% OFF
FiordiFrutta—Wild Berries or Blueberry Spread, 8.82oz.	25% OFF
Fruitables—Assorted Dog Treats, 5 oz.	25% OFF
Good Health—Rosemary & Sea Salt Olive Oil Chips 5oz.	25% OFF
Namaste Foods—GF, Sugar-Free Muffin Mix, 14 oz.	25% OFF
R.W. Knudsen—Organic Apple Butter, 16 oz.	25% OFF
Santa Cruz—Organic Concord Grape Juice, 32 oz.	25% OFF
Santa Cruz—Organic Orange Mango Juice, 32 oz.	25% OFF
Coco Hydro—Coconut Water, .78 oz.	30% OFF
Aura Cacia—Organic Essential oils, .25 oz., assorted	30% OFF

AND MANY MORE ITEMS!

ENZYME-RICH FOODS

RAW FRUITS: Avocados, dates, figs, kiwi, pineapple, mangos, papayas, grapes

SWEETENERS: Raw honey

DAIRY: Raw milk, raw cream

CULTURED DAIRY: Cultured butter, raw cheese, cultured cream, yogurt, kefir

SOY FOODS (in strict moderation): Miso

LACTO-FERMENTED FOODS: all fermented vegetables such as Kim-Chi, sauerkraut, pickles, chutneys, old-fashioned ginger ale and root beer, kombucha, kvass, coconut water kefir, etc.

MEATS: Rare and raw— grass-fed and pastured—as well as well-aged meats

SPROUTED GRAINS, NUTS, AND SEEDS

“The body is like a piano,
and happiness is like music.
It is needful to have the instrument
in good order”.

Author unknown

