

# Living Raw

By Allison Tannis, BSc., MSc.

Living raw is the new old. It's the old way of eating that is becoming the new movement in healthy living. And, there are many reasons why to try it. Some of which you probably did not know.

We all know the disadvantages of eating processed foods: the lack of nutritional content, the addition of unnatural preservatives, trans fats, and sweeteners. However, have you ever thought about the enormous benefits of eating real, natural foods?

Raw and living foods are foods that contain enzymes. Living foods contain more enzymes than raw foods. For example, a nut is a raw food but, a sprouted nut is a living food. The nut contains dormant enzymes. The sprouted nut contains only active enzymes.

## **Is this a new diet fad?**

Absolutely not. The original diets of humans did not include food from drive-thrus and bakeries. Our main food staple for centuries has been fruits, vegetables, whole grains and nuts. To date, plant based foods are the most efficient and effective way for our bodies to get energy. Perhaps in another million years our bodies will have evolved enough to be able to properly identify and digest a French fry. For now a French fry is an unfamiliar item to our digestive systems.

**What is a living or raw diet?** A raw diet is one that contains foods in their raw state, or not cooked over a temperature of about 116 degrees Fahrenheit. At this temperature enzymes can become inactive.

**What is a raw foodist or a living foodist?** A raw or living foodist eats a diet of 75%+ living or raw (preferably organic) foods. Ideally, a raw diet is 100% raw and living foods however, it is best for each person to determine what percentage is right for them.

## **What does the science have to say about raw foods?**

Scientists have been exploring the pH effect of food in various ways. There are a few general conclusions that can be made from the research to date. Firstly, the body has a pH of about 7.4 and can not survive beyond pH values of 6.8 to 8.0. The higher the concentration of the ion, H<sup>+</sup>, the more acidic the pH. The ion, H<sup>+</sup>, is involved in many vital reactions and its balanced concentration is essential to life. Secondly, studies have shown that an acidic diet negatively affects calcium metabolism in the body resulting in skeletal calcium loss. (*Osteoporos Int.*, June 2001) In other words, an acidic diet is not bone healthy.

## **Why live raw?**

1) Raw and living foods are enzymatically active. Our digestive system has to create enzymes to breakdown the foods we eat into the energy components it needs. This is a very difficult and energy expending task. Enzymes that naturally occur in foods help your body digest foods. There are some who theorize that the extensive production of digestive

enzymes needed to breakdown the highly processed North American diet may cause the pancreas to burn out leading to gastrointestinal illness.

2) A raw diet is naturally high in insoluble and soluble fibre. Fibre has many healthy benefits including helping reduce cholesterol levels, improving gastrointestinal health and bowel regularity. Fibre also makes us feel full, reducing over eating.

3) Raw foods reduce the acidity of the North American diet. Almost all of the foods we eat today are acidic. The biggest group of alkaline food is fruits and vegetables. Eating raw allows our bodies to work on healing and living, opposed to rebalancing its pH after a meal.

4) A raw and living diet is energy and eco friendly. It requires less electricity as there is little to no cooking or processing involved.

5) Organic agriculture is supported in a raw and living diet. This type of agriculture preserves farms, top soil, water ways, flora and fauna. It also reduces the amount of harmful chemicals (e.g. pesticides) produced and released into our environment.

When it comes to living raw there are many benefits – the largest of which has been left to last. A diet rich in a variety of fruits and vegetables has been proven in countless scientific studies to prevent some forms of cancer and may be beneficial in preventing heart disease. Also, plants are rich sources of vital nutrients, such as vitamins, minerals and antioxidants which are essential elements in many vital body functions.

A raw or living diet has many benefits and may be right for some people. Try eating more organic fruits and vegetables, and reduce your intake of processed foods to get you started on your way to a healthy diet. Read more about health and nutrition so you can make educated choices about your diet thus, you can enjoy healthy living.

*Allison Tannis, BSc., MSc. is a nutritional educator and author of [Vitality: Quest for a healthy diet](http://www.allisontannis.com). Visit [www.allisontannis.com](http://www.allisontannis.com) for more information, articles and upcoming appearances.*