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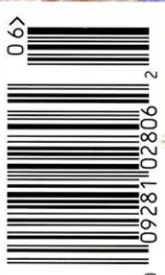
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WHAT ARE THE
BENEFITS OF A

RAW FOODS DIET?

BY BRIAN CLEMENT, PHD, NMD, CN



Unraveling the mysteries
of the living foods
lifestyle

It seems like everywhere you turn, the term “raw” appears on popular food labels. Natural food stores are stocking their shelves with commercial raw vegan products from “raw protein bars” to “raw almond butter,” “raw sugar,” and even “raw chocolate.” By some estimates, the raw foods industry has experienced double-digit growth over the past couple of years and there are no signs of slowing down.

The boom for the raw foods industry is not just limited to the grocery store aisles. Juice shops are opening in cities across the country, promoting the benefits of consuming raw, fresh-pressed fruits and vegetables. Bottled, unpasteurized juices are becoming more readily available at mainstream stores and even coffee shop chains.

With this influx of raw food and beverage options in the market, it can be difficult to discern what the optimal foods are if you want to follow a proper raw foods diet. Without adequate information, many consumers are often left wondering “is this diet truly healthy?”

Can I really survive on just vegetables?

Two of the very first questions I am asked about a raw foods diet are “What can I eat?” and “Can I really survive on just vegetables?”

It is important to note that a healthy raw vegan diet consists of a wide variety of plant-based foods. This includes fresh vegetables, sprouts, nuts, seeds, grains, and fruits. These living foods are rich in antioxidants, vitamins, minerals, and plant-based proteins. They supply

the oxygen, alkalinity, and bioelectrical charges vital for cellular health, detoxifying the body, and for our overall well-being.

At the Hippocrates Health Institute (HHI), where I have served as co-director for the last 30 years, we take the raw foods diet a step further by incorporating wheatgrass as a central component to our living foods program. Ann Wigmore, the woman who discovered the juicing benefits of wheatgrass, founded our Institute over 60 years ago and we have been using wheatgrass as a dietary supplement and healing tool ever since.

Wheatgrass: nature's greatest healer

Wheatgrass is considered nature’s “greatest healer” and is a complete food with an ideal alkaline-acid balance. Just one ounce of wheatgrass contains 103 vitamins, minerals, and amino acids. Wheatgrass is also a powerful detoxifier and cleanses the blood due to its high chlorophyll content. It helps rid the body of heavy metals, pollutants, and other toxins that become stored in the body’s tissues and organs over the years.

Guests at Hippocrates drink daily shots of wheatgrass—ideally taken on an empty stomach first thing in the morning—in addition to eating a plentiful raw vegan diet.

Raw foods are generally prepared using cold-pressed oils and are heated or dehydrated at low temperatures, if at all. At Hippocrates, we prepare foods using organic oils such as olive, hemp, and raw sesame. Instead of vinegar, we use lemon, limes, and herbs. As a rule, for foods to be raw, they must be “cooked” at temperatures lower than 115 degrees. Our bodies need all the enzymes available in the food we eat, and heating food above 115 degrees destroys most of the plant’s nutrients and causes the food to be unrecognizable to our bodies.

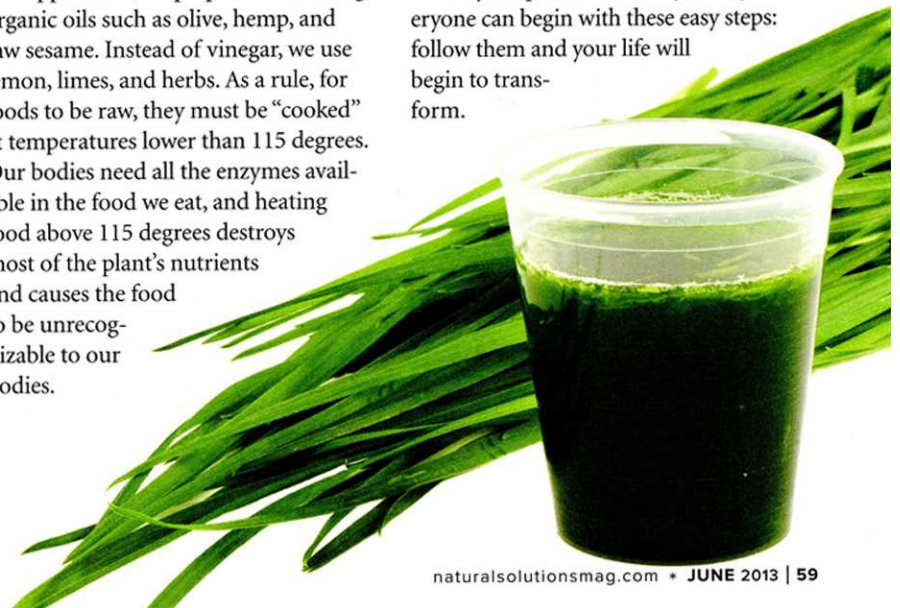
Reversing disease with a raw foods diet

A living foods diet provides enormous health benefits for those looking to improve their general health and for those who want to prevent premature aging or help reverse major diseases. Living foods are so beneficial because they contain four essential elements that support the immune system: hormones, oxygen, phytochemicals, and enzymes.

By nourishing your body with these immune-boosting elements—instead of fat-borne toxins and chemicals—people who adopt a proper raw vegan diet often experience increased vitality, energy, and mental clarity, to name just a few benefits.

A living-foods diet has also proven to reverse any number of serious diseases. At Hippocrates, guests come from all over the world to heal themselves from crippling diseases, either in conjunction with traditional medical treatment, or when Western medicine no longer has any answers for them. We have literally seen thousands of guests reverse diseases and ailments such as cancer, type 2 diabetes, chronic fatigue syndrome, adrenal exhaustion, arthritis, and fibromyalgia. We’ve also seen skeletal redevelopment, and people losing their excess weight.

While the benefits of a raw foods diet are numerous, getting started can be overwhelming at first. Below are some of my common sense tips for transitioning to a raw foods diet. No matter where you are on your personal health journey, everyone can begin with these easy steps: follow them and your life will begin to transform.





FIRST TIP:

Find a local juice bar where you can get a big dose of veggie nutrition (or purchase a juicer for home use).

Juicing is the fastest and best way for the body to get all the essential vitamins and nutrients it needs. Within 20 minutes of drinking fresh vegetable juice, your body begins to absorb all the nutrients it just consumed—meaning you can start feeling better immediately.

At Hippocrates, our signature green juice contains five ounces each of sunflower sprouts, pea sprouts, cucumber, and celery. Personally, I aim to drink a gallon of green juice daily (yes, a gallon).

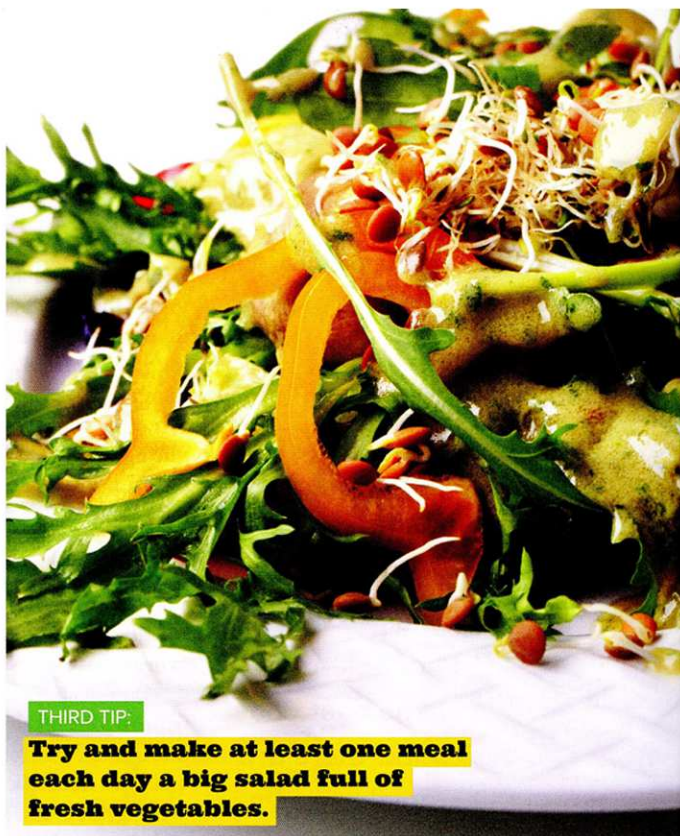
If the juice bar sells wheatgrass, start with a shot a day (or half a shot a day) and work yourself up to four ounces each day. Wheatgrass is the king of living juices. It provides the full range of vitamins and minerals I mentioned earlier, and is also a complete source of protein.



SECOND TIP:

Stay away from freeze-dried and powdered alternatives.

Our research shows that wheatgrass supplements and freeze-dried powders are only two percent as effective as fresh-juiced wheatgrass consumed within 15 minutes of juicing. The nutrients in wheatgrass begin to oxidize—or break down—very quickly after that 15-minute time period.



THIRD TIP:

Try and make at least one meal each day a big salad full of fresh vegetables.

The benefits of eating fresh, unprocessed vegetables are many. Make sure to add in plenty of green vegetables to your salad, as they are the foods most commonly missing in our modern diet. Greens are very high in calcium, magnesium, iron, potassium, phosphorous, and zinc. They are also loaded with fiber, folic acid, chlorophyll, and other micronutrients and phytochemicals. Try experimenting with greens such as bok choy, kale, mustard greens, broccoli rabé, or dandelion root.

If you are feeling particularly adventurous, you may also want to try adding sprouted lentils, sprouted broccoli rabé, or sprouted alfalfa to your salad. Sprouts contain a super concentration of natural enzymes that are easily digestible, making them up to 30 times more nutritious than even organic vegetables.

Take it slow

Transitioning to a raw vegan diet can be challenging—the important thing to remember is to take it slow. Try one thing at a time and continue to build on each success.

If you are interested in learning more about the benefits of a raw vegan diet or the Hippocrates living foods program, visit hippocratesinst.org.

BRIAN CLEMENT PHD, NMD, CN, is the co-director of the Hippocrates Health Institute, based in West Palm Beach, Florida. Hippocrates has been the preeminent leader in the field of complementary health care and education for over 60 years.