



*Nutrition*  
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# GO WILD WITH RAW FOOD!

## GETTING WILD: The Raw Facts

A raw food diet incorporates high-quality, minimally processed foods, which are beneficial in reducing the risk of lifestyle-related chronic disease often associated with overconsumption and weight gain. High in fibre, raw foods provide the body with the vitamins, minerals and antioxidants necessary for optimum health. Refined carbohydrates and saturated fats—two health foes—are almost eliminated in a raw food diet and replaced with foods such as nuts, seeds and avocados that supply your body with heart-healthy fats. Also, by following a vegetarian or vegan diet such as the raw food diet, you're lowering your impact on the environment.

## GETTING RAW: The Menu

Raw foods are free of wheat, dairy, soy and refined sugars; nothing is processed above 48°C (118° F). A strict raw food diet is made up of raw fruits, vegetables, sprouted grains, nuts and seeds, edible flowers, mushrooms, sea vegetables, cold-pressed oils, fermented foods and natural sweeteners such as agave nectar and raw honey.

It can be challenging to follow a 100% raw food diet. The simplest and most versatile foods included in a raw lifestyle are salads, freshly made juice and sprouted nuts, but for those with culinary aspirations, the sky is the limit! There are endless combinations and meal ideas for a raw food enthusiast:

- Sprouted nuts and dried fruit made into trail mixes
- Crackers made from dehydrated flax and nuts paired with guacamole
- Cold soups like gazpacho
- Raw chocolate "mousse" made with avocados
- Lasagnas made from nut milk cheese and layered zucchini
- Flatbread made of sprouted raw grain
- Vegetable sushi
- Raw pizzas

### Raw Food Arsenal: The Tools

Invest in quality appliances for your raw food kitchen

- A high-quality blender for nut milks and sauces.
- A heavy-duty juicer for fresh fruit and vegetable juices.
- A precise food dehydrator for making crackers, "sautéing" veggies and warming foods.

This handout is meant for educational purposes only. The information contained is not meant to replace consultation with a Registered Dietitian or qualified health professional.

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**Have a nutrition question?**

Ask Desiree, the Choices Dietitian at [nutrition@choicesmarket.com](mailto:nutrition@choicesmarket.com)

## GETTING THE BIG PICTURE: The Possible Side Effects

If going totally raw, you may experience “detoxification symptoms” such as diarrhea, pimples, headaches and dizziness, which are commonly accompanied by low energy levels. Gradually converting to a raw diet will decrease these side effects substantially. This is especially important if you normally eat a lot of processed foods: your body will not be accustomed to a low-sugar, low-salt, high-fibre diet. Drink plenty of water to flush your system and prevent constipation from increased fibre intake. Once your body becomes accustomed to your new lifestyle, your energy levels should pick up and symptoms should ease.

There is also the risk of deficiencies due to eating a more restrictive diet. In a vegan diet, vitamins B12 and D are of particular concern. Ensure that you get enough plant protein, vitamins and minerals by eating a varied and balanced diet. There are also “raw” multivitamins available to fill any gaps.

## GETTING IN DEEP: The Transition To Raw Foods

While there is controversy in the raw community about going 100% raw, from a nutrition perspective you can be as raw as you want to be! For those just starting a raw-food diet, try going 25%–50% raw. You can start by increasing your intake of fruits and vegetables, which assist in maintaining a healthy weight and preventing chronic disease. Once you’ve formed healthy eating habits you can add raw protein sources such as raw sprouted nuts and whole grains to your diet. A 25%–75% raw diet makes it easier to eat out socially: food is meant to be shared! To find others walking on the wild side, get in touch with your local raw food group, [www.rawbc.org](http://www.rawbc.org) and join a raw potluck.

### Oops! Common Mistakes Made On The Raw Food Diet

**Acid Wash:** When acidic fruits are consumed in excess, the acidity can eat away the enamel of your teeth or damage the lining of the mouth. The fruits to beware of are oranges, pineapple, lemons and other citrus.

**All shriveled up:** Dried fruits eaten on a regular basis can cause digestive (gas!) and dental problems. Dried fruits are very sticky and can cause cavities. Try to save dried fruit for occasional use.

**Against the grain:** Often people on a raw food diet eat more oils and not enough protein. Sprouted grains add variety and vital nutrients to the diet. Try a sprouted quinoa pilaf or add sprouted bulgur to salads.

### Mythology: Common Raw Food Myths

**Cold Shoulder:** Everything you eat doesn’t need to be cold – unless you like it that way! Heat plates quickly in the oven before serving food. You can also heat foods in a dehydrator or using the warming plate of the coffee maker.

**Bor – ring!** A raw food diet is more than just plate loads of fruits and vegetables. Fresh herbs, raw soy sauce, kimchee, citrus zest and raw nut butters all add flavour to meals.

**Tick Tock:** Not all raw foods are time consuming to prepare. The ultimate breakfast on the go is a handful of raw trail mix and a fresh juice! Salads, smoothies and soups are all quick and easy to prepare. Take a bit of time on the weekend and prepare quick snacks for the rest of the week.

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