

OUR TOP 12 STRATEGIES FOR LONG TERM SUCCESS ON A RAW PLANT-BASED DIET



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1 - GET EDUCATED!



A study conducted by the Columbia University department of epidemiology in 2008 examined factors that affect adherence to a raw vegan diet after a stay at a raw vegan institute. The strongest predictor of future adherence was the level of education people had at baseline, specifically at the beginning of their stay at the institute. The more educated people were about raw food nutrition, the more likely they were to be adhering to the program down the road.

That shouldn't be surprising, as it applies to many other areas of life as well. It's more difficult to be successful at anything if one doesn't really know what to do in comparison to an educated approach.

Over the years, we have unfortunately seen so many people discontinue eating a raw food diet because they were taking a less than well-educated approach. One of the consequences of this can be depletion of key nutrients, which may include sodium, iron, vitamin B12, vitamin D, iodine, omega 3 fats, zinc, selenium, etc. We have seen omnivores become low in many of these same nutrients as well, which tells us these issues are a matter of proper knowledge and implementation, not simply a vegan vs. omnivore issue. All of these potential issues can be fairly easily avoided and/or corrected with the proper education or highly qualified individual guidance.

When you are replete with the nutrients your body needs to function optimally, while avoiding the excesses that can also sometimes occur with lack of proper guidance, you are more likely to reach the level of health you are seeking which would provide major incentive to keep on your dietary path long term. If you are lacking in or have an excess of some key nutrient(s) and as a result experience less than optimal health, you will continue searching for ways to improve your health.

In this search, you may come across someone more educated than you about a particular topic but is not well educated about raw food nutrition. When this happens the likelihood of you modifying your diet away from a health supporting raw food diet becomes very high. You may for example add animal products back which may supply what you were lacking, but may come with their own set of problems. Or you may add grossly excessive amounts of (a) key nutrient(s) which may lead to a variety of different health problems. With better education and guidance, you would have been able to supply the key nutrient(s) in a more healthful manner, allowing you to maintain all the benefits of staying on a raw food diet better suited to your individual needs, while avoiding the drawbacks of less healthful foods or supplements in your diet.

We have been experiencing excellent health from eating a very healthful raw plant-based diet for over 25 years each! Why is it that we have been able to achieve this when so many others have not? Proper education is a major foundation!

Other times even when raw foodists feel great and are very healthy, someone may still come along who has more information than they do about a specific topic (omega 3 fats for example) and convince the raw foodist they are not on the healthiest path. Then they may, for example, add fish into their diets and start to introduce mercury and other toxins into their system and may eventually suffer the health consequences of that exposure. Proper testing and guidance would have allowed the raw foodist in question either 1) to see that their omega 3 levels were excellent as we have seen in many long term raw foodists who take a suitable dietary approach, including ourselves, or 2) see what needs to be corrected and know how to solve the issue without the risk of potential exposure to toxins.

We had a different example of this same theme in class a few years ago where someone had been eating mostly fruits and vegetables for a period of time and felt great. Then she started to hear about how allegedly bad fruit was and decreased her intake of it as a result. To replace those calories she added more nuts and seeds to her diet and didn't feel as well, since they were more difficult to digest in significant quantities for her. She shared with us during the class that she was so excited that she now "had permission" to add fruit back into her diet and go back to the way of eating that allowed her to experience a higher level of health and well-being.

On the one hand we were delighted to hear she was getting back on track, while on the other hand it was sad for us to hear about how she had not been experiencing her highest level of health as a result of misinformation. This perpetuation of misinformation is unfortunately extremely common today.

Often the people we hear from the most on social media spend most of their time making videos and writing articles focused on promotion, instead of having made an in depth study of raw food nutrition for many years or many decades. This makes it extra difficult to find accurate and appropriate information for those seeking it out.

Our commitment to you is to provide the most accurate and responsible information available based on our over 25 years each of personal, clinical, research, curriculum development, and teaching-based experience regarding raw food nutrition and its healthful implementation over the long term in a way that works for you! By reading the rest of this ebook you will be giving yourself an excellent foundation for long term success. From there, you can take advantage of our articles, YouTube videos, Facebook posts, raw food nutrition classes, Dr. Karin's Raw Food Nutrition Handbook available on amazon.com and other fine booksellers, and individualized nutrition consulting and lab work analysis practice, all of which you can access through our www.rawfoodeducation.com and www.rawfoodconsulting.com websites. All of this is designed to help you achieve the highest level of health you wish to experience!

2 - EAT ENOUGH FRUIT!



In the general population and within various health philosophies, carbohydrates are considered to be unhealthy. Within certain camps of the raw food community, fruit is considered to be unhealthy because of its simple carbohydrate (or “sugar”) content, particularly the simple carbohydrate fructose. Various studies have been done in the last several years showing that excess calories from fructose can be more easily converted into body fat than the same amount of excess calories from glucose, at least in rodents. It's pointed out that human populations have continued to gain weight over the past several decades as the content of high fructose corn syrup has increased in our food supply. Therefore, the often suggested solution to avoid weight gain is to avoid carbohydrates, especially those that contain a considerable amount of fructose.

Fruit contains a notable amount of fructose and is therefore not healthful according to this line of thinking. Not only it is it said that fruit will cause weight gain, it is also implicated in diabetes, cancer, and overgrowth of candida by some sources.

Let's consider some additional information to help put everything into perspective. At the same time we've been gaining weight and increasing our high fructose corn syrup consumption, we have been consuming more overall calories as well. So which is it, the calories or the fructose? The fact is any source of excess calories can be

converted into body fat. That goes for any form of carbohydrate, fat, or protein, known as the three macronutrients, which are our sources of calories.

Fresh fruit is low in calorie density, meaning large quantities of fruit that help us feel full and satisfied don't contain an excess of calories. It's a wonderful feeling to be able to fill one's stomach to a satisfying level while knowing one is eating an appropriate amount of calories for their body's needs.

Fruit is also very easy to digest, allowing your body more energy for healing, repair, and other processes such as allowing the body and brain to work optimally. Interestingly, the ease of fruit digestion is related to simple carbohydrate content. These carbohydrates are in the simplest form, meaning the body has to do little else to be able to obtain energy from fruit. Fruit is also very high in many key vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients, such as potassium and vitamin C.

In terms of consuming excess calories from fructose or any other source, it is actually quite difficult to do when consuming fresh fruit. For example, in my day and a half of eating only oranges experiment as described below, I (Dr. Rick) maxed out at 6 medium oranges in one sitting. At roughly 59 calories per orange, that's 354 calories on a full stomach. I did that 4 times on the first day, which resulted in a calorie intake of about 1416 calories. Although 24 oranges is a lot to eat, I was still at a calorie deficit! To get up to 2000 calories I would have needed to add nearly 10 more oranges. 34 oranges is 9 pounds of food! I could have also added 5.5 medium bananas (1.4 pounds) to the 24 oranges (6.4 pounds) get to 2000 calories from a total of 7.8 pounds of food.

If I wanted to obtain 2000 calories eating only bananas, it would take about 19 medium bananas, weighing nearly 5 pounds (2242 grams). That would be easier than consuming 34 oranges, but still challenging for many people. To go beyond that and consume an excess of calories from fruit is even more challenging.

On the other hand, excess calories and fructose from processed foods is much easier to accomplish. 10 3-inch chocolate donuts contain about 2000 calories, but only weigh 443 grams, not even one pound. Most of us need to eat much more than that each day to feel full and satisfied, and in the case of processed foods that extra volume of food comes with an excess of fructose, calories, additional unhealthy ingredients, and can be difficult to digest for some, placing quite a burden on the body. With fruit, one can eat a much greater volume of food and still have an appropriate amount of calories.

Along with that one gets an abundance of nutrients, fiber, and water lacking in the processed foods in an easy to digest food without the unhealthy ingredients. There is just no comparison between fruit and junk food!

Some people claim that all fructose turns to fat in the liver. With all the fruit we've eaten over the past 25+ years each, (the majority of our calories) if this statement were true we'd have to be airlifted out to leave the house! If this were true it would also be easily detected on a basic blood chemistry lipid panel by someone who is fluent in lab work analysis.

Without fruit as a source of calories on diets that are mostly to all raw, those calories have to come from somewhere. As vegetables are so low in calorie density, you just can't get enough calories even if you spend all day stuffing yourself full of vegetables and do little else. The other major sources of calories on a raw food diet are fat sources. Most people don't realize how much fat is in a typical raw food diet that is low in fruit. All those nuts, seeds, coconuts, avocados and oils as staples in one's diet end up being very calorie dense. People don't feel nearly as energetic as they could, and they can't fill up their stomachs with satisfying amounts of these foods without consuming too many calories that lead to an excess of body fat. After a while they may discontinue eating raw saying that raw food did not work for them. There is no good reason to be afraid of fruit because of myths that don't hold up to scientific scrutiny or individual biochemical reality. Just because someone makes a statement at a presentation or on a video, writes something for an article or blog, or in a book, that does necessarily not make it true.

One of Dr. Rick's favorite aspects of interpreting blood chemistry results of high fruit eaters is going over their blood sugar level. The majority of the time it is at an excellent level, well within the healthy range of 65-99 mg/dl. Other blood sugar tests such as A1C and insulin also look consistently excellent. In other words, if fruit was responsible for raising blood sugar and contributing to diabetes, we would see just the opposite in high fruit eaters, but we don't.

Others claim that fruit is "acid-forming" due to its "sugar" content. Dr. Rick made a video where he consumed only oranges for 36 hours, and for the final 24 hours of that time period he collected all of his urine. When he measured the pH of his urine, it was 7.0, exactly neutral. If fruit was truly acid forming, then his urine would have been acidic, as his kidneys would have dumped the extra acidity into his urine to help maintain the slightly alkaline pH of the bloodstream.

You can see that video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lhlwWVs3w68>

The bottom line is that fruit is easy to digest, very nutritious, tastes great, is fun to eat, and allows us to eat satisfying quantities so we feel full with an appropriate amount of calories. It comes in its own biodegradable container, and contains plenty of water, fiber, vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients, antioxidants, etc. As important as fruit is on a raw food diet, fruit by itself cannot supply all the nutrients we need in adequate amounts for optimal health and brain and body function, which brings us to the next important point...

3 - EAT ENOUGH VEGETABLES!

Vegetables are incredibly nutritious! Many raw foodists do not consume enough vegetables for optimal health. In addition to being high in water, fiber, vitamins, phytonutrients, and antioxidants, vegetables are generally rich in many key minerals such as iron, calcium, magnesium, and many others. Many people in several camps of raw food end up eating less than optimal quantities of vegetables. In the high fruit low fat community, it happens often because on a raw food diet containing 10% of the calories from fat, it is quite challenging to be able to eat a large enough quantity of food throughout



the day to obtain an adequate number of calories. As discussed in the eat enough fruit section above, depending on the mix of fruits you consume, you may need to eat 5 to 10 pounds (roughly 2 to 5 kg) or more of fruit to meet your daily calorie requirements. That is challenging but can be accomplished if you are dedicated to the cause!

To get an adequate number of calories from vegetables and green sprouts exclusively, you would need to eat more like 20 pounds (9 kg) of these foods per day! This is just not feasible, no matter how dedicated you are. Because fresh fruit is generally 3-4 times more calorie dense than raw vegetables and most sprouts, it becomes even more difficult to consume enough calories if you add a significant amount of vegetables to your diet when the fat content is very low. So based upon the physical room it takes to get enough calories, people tend to skimp on the veggies and go for the fruit. Issues such as anemia from iron deficiency are not uncommon to develop over time in high fruiterers who don't eat meaningful quantities of vegetables.

There are philosophy-based thoughts on mimicking apes, etc. but the most important consideration for us is how we as human beings optimize our health in the modern world in the 21st century.

Many low fruit, higher fat raw foodists skimp on the vegetables as well, but for different reasons. They often eat "gourmet" raw foods, where many of the ingredients are nutritionally devoid, such as sweeteners and oils. These foods are high in calories and have very little, if any, important nutrients in them. For example, coconut oil provides virtually zero vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients, antioxidants, fiber, or protein. The same is true of most sweeteners. Additionally, when your taste buds are constantly bombarded with overstimulating foods like these, they "downregulate," meaning they become less sensitive. As a result the delicate and subtle yet delicious flavors of vegetables can no longer be detected and vegetables don't seem as appealing, unless they are covered in a dressing or found in a recipe with too much oil, salt, spices, or refined sugar. When people in this situation stop consuming these concentrated foods, simpler, more health supporting foods can seem boring for a while. But just as our eyes adapt to inside lighting conditions when we come in from bright sunshine, the taste buds also adapt and become more sensitive, they actually "upregulate" when we stop overstimulating them. Full taste bud nerve recovery can take anywhere from a few weeks to a few months, but some increased sensitivity begins to occur sooner than that. In other words, health supporting foods that seem boring at first will begin to taste better and better as time goes on if we avoid the overstimulating ones. It is worth the wait! And if you don't want to wait that long, you can try, for example, a juice only diet for a few days. You'd be amazed at how much more flavor is in your foods and how much less you will feel the need for salt, spices, oil, concentrated sweeteners, etc. It is wonderful to be able to taste the beautiful flavors of fruits and vegetables in their natural state while simultaneously enjoying the health benefits. A more extreme version is to undergo a water fast (only with proper medical supervision!). When eating food after consuming only water for a period of time, there are several new dimensions of flavor in foods that one never knew were there before.

Other times, people succumb to myths such as certain vegetables are bad for your health. Some will say for example that raw cruciferous (cabbage plant family) vegetables are bad for the thyroid gland as they contain substances that block the uptake of iodine. Although this caution may apply appropriately in rare specific individual situations when someone has already developed a thyroid issue, this generalized claim that raw cruciferous vegetables are bad for everyone because they will cause the thyroid problem in the first place has very little scientific support. In fact, please watch the following video that describes how Dr. Rick has consumed about 8,000 heads of raw cauliflower in addition to notable quantities of other raw cruciferous vegetables over his 28 years as a raw vegan.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CL3GsBUmlN8>

If his thyroid gland was as negatively affected by all those cruciferous veggies as some claim, he 1) would be suffering the symptoms of hypothyroidism (slow metabolism, weight gain, etc.) and 2) lab tests would show objective signs, such as thyroid hormones and lipid measurements being off. He has had several comprehensive thyroid panels done and all have been excellent, and he is not overweight. Can you imagine what would happen to someone who ate substantial quantities of fructose from fruit with a severely sluggish thyroid gland if all fructose turned to fat and a slow thyroid caused by certain vegetables made it even worse? Dr. Rick would be as big as a house! These claims simply don't hold up in his case. He is probably not the one in a million exception either. This being said, we do recognize there are some situations where it is appropriate to limit one's intake of raw cabbage family foods from the diet, which can be determined with the assistance of a qualified health care provider.

Others claim that other vegetables such as lettuce, or anything bitter or not young, are bad for us as well. These claims are often philosophically-based or based on incomplete research taken out of context. When we allow hurdles such as this to get in the way of rational food choices, we miss out on all the benefits these foods have to offer.

Raw cruciferous vegetables for example, are very antioxidant-rich, even more so than their cooked counterparts, which are powerhouses in their own right. They are loaded with a host of beneficial minerals that fruit is often lacking, as well as vitamins, phytonutrients, antioxidants, and other nutrients. The majority of the successful long term (several decades) raw foodists we know, including ourselves, eat gigantic salads with large quantities of a variety of vegetables often.

For more information regarding nutrient analysis of fruit only vs. raw diets that include vegetables, please see the video links in the next section.

One of the most important actions you can take in order to eat enough vegetables is to...

4 - EAT ENOUGH FAT!



There are a number of issues that can affect the long term success of people when they limit their fat intake too much. The first issue has to do with getting an adequate number of calories as discussed previously. Fruits and vegetables are high in water, high in fiber, and low in fat. This makes them very low in calorie density which means large quantities of food don't contain very many calories. This is great in that one can eat lots of food and get good and full without excess calories. When taken too far however, it can become difficult to get enough calories. Many of us have jobs and kids and school and schedules that don't allow us enough time during the day to dedicate to eating such huge quantities of food. Additionally, most of us don't have the patience or willingness to be that full all of the time. Remember also that fruit is 3-4 times more calorie dense than vegetables, so when fat is so low, fruit is often preferred over vegetables, which means we are missing adequate quantities of key minerals that are abundant in vegetables but found in smaller amounts in fruit.

Getting to fat itself, if we were to start with a base of fruits and vegetables, then add a reasonable quantity of nuts or seeds to our diets, maybe a few tablespoons per day to bring the percentage of calories from fat up to maybe 20% of total calories, this increases the calorie density enough so consuming all of the calories needed becomes easier. You don't have to eat as great of a volume of food as shown in the example below. This means you have more room for vegetables and can therefore take advantage of all their nutritional benefits such as mineral content. Additionally, many nuts and seeds are much better sources of key minerals than fruit as well. Let's look at one example indicative of the principles stated above.

We stated above that in order to obtain 2000 calories one needs to consume about 34 oranges, which is 9 pounds (4 kg). With that quantity of food to consume there is not much room left over for vegetables, let alone much else! Those oranges supply about 5.5 % of their calories from fat. Let's do a little bit of dietary shifting to see what happens when we change the fat content of the diet by adding some chia seeds and sesame seeds. We're going to take away 200 calories of oranges and replace those calories with about 2 tablespoons each of chia and sesame seeds. Now we have 30 oranges instead of 34, which combined with the seeds weighs about 8 pounds instead of 9 pounds from the same amount of calories from oranges alone. The fat content is now 12% of calories instead of 5.5% from oranges alone. By replacing 4 oranges with 4 tablespoons total of sesame and chia seeds, we have significantly increased the content of several key minerals. By increasing the fat content, we have also saved one pound of food for the same amount of calories. We would suggest you replace that one pound saved by adding a pound of vegetables to your daily diet. When you add those vegetables you get even greater quantities of several key minerals than you would have from the same quantity of oranges. That one pound of vegetables supplies about 100 calories, so you can take away two more oranges to make up for those calories if you want.

The bottom line here is that by adding mineral rich fat sources to our diets, not only do we get the minerals directly from those foods, we also decrease the quantity of food we have to eat to obtain enough calories, which leaves more room to consume more vegetables from which we get even more minerals. In this common example, when implemented appropriately, more fat means greater nutrient density.

Please note here, we are not suggesting that addition of empty calorie oils to your diet. We are suggesting, as with all aspects of good nutrition, wise and healthful choices.

Videos that support the points mentioned above:

Nutrient content of oranges only vs. vegetables and seeds. These videos also show how the fruit only diet was lacking in essential fatty acids, but the addition of vegetables and especially chia seeds supplied more than enough.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BhYL3xj6aL8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LYBE5VQ45dA>

The Green Difference – The Importance of Leafy Greens on a Raw Food Diet

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YunJa8ZgFLQ>

My Top Five Favorite Leafy Greens:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1XNXWIPYEgw>

For more detailed analysis of the nutrient content of various raw food diets, please see the Raw Food Nutrition Handbook: An Essential Guide to Understanding Raw Food Diets, by Karin Dina, D.C.

5 - BEWARE OF MYTHS THAT LIMIT YOUR INTAKE OF HEALTHY FOODS.

We've covered a few of these already in the points above, and have hopefully started to dispel some of them for you. In a nutshell we've covered some myths such as fruit is bad, fat is bad, and raw cruciferous and other vegetables are bad. There are so many more out there! You don't get enough protein, iron, calcium, vitamin D, vitamin B12, omega 3's, and so forth on a plant-based diet. You can only eat when it's light out, juice is junk food because the fiber is gone, blending destroys all the nutrients so smoothies are junk food, all cooked food is bad, and many others.



Myths are perpetuated in the health community as they have been for years, and now with social media, different versions of these myths appear as people put their spin on various topics to build an audience. This makes it ever more difficult to be successful eating a raw plant-based diet, especially when one is new to the idea and may not have enough information or experience yet to decide for themselves what makes sense and what doesn't.

We see many people relying on one source for information, albeit one particular teacher or one particular camp of raw food, and following it exclusively. This can be helpful in cutting through confusion because one can simply follow a particular plan or set of guidelines and need not worry about conflicting information. One may think they have found all the answers in one place and there is comfort in that. One may find other people on the same path who have made dramatic improvements in their health who didn't find those improvements with other approaches. This happens in a variety of raw food approaches, not just one, although in general some approaches are clearly better suited for particular challenges or endeavors than others.

On the positive side one isn't confused anymore because they have something solid to connect with and a sense of community and camaraderie, but on the other side, this strategy may lead to intolerance of other approaches. The fact is there is no one place or one person who has all the answers, even us! You will find both truth and myths in virtually every approach out there, from within and from outside of the raw food community. Often times, although admittedly more challenging, taking the best of various approaches can create the best health plan for any given individual, which may be different depending upon the person's individual biochemistry, goals, work, family, and social schedule.

6 - OBTAIN HIGH QUALITY, AFFORDABLE FOOD.

Now that you are thinking about fruits and vegetables as the foundation of your diet instead of snacks, and knowing that it takes many pounds or kilos of them each day to obtain an adequate amount of calories, you may realize that you will need to buy large quantities of them to have available. It's hard to eat healthy food consistently if you don't have enough or if it is too costly. There are several options for purchasing produce other than traditional grocery or health food stores that we list below.



A) FARMERS MARKETS

One of the main benefits of farmers markets is that the food is grown locally, and tends to be fresher than food found in a store. At farmers markets in our area, organically grown or pesticide-free food is fortunately easy to find. Because the food is local and fresh, one may often find a much greater variety of produce compared to what is available in a store, where shelf life and transportability are major concerns that dictate availability. We look forward to each season to buy the freshest local food. For example, we love peaches and other stone fruit in the summer, and look forward to pomegranates in the fall and persimmons in late fall and early winter.

As you get to know some of the farmers at your local market, you can inquire to see if they would be willing to sell you larger quantities than the average consumer purchases, for a discounted price. Some will and some won't. We have been fortunate enough to find some good sellers who know that we are raw food enthusiasts and will buy in quantity from them consistently if they offer us a good deal. As there are many other raw food enthusiasts in our area of northern California, many farmers are familiar with the benefits of selling in quantity.

You will tend to get especially good deals on items in season. This seasonal model works out as a double bonus as you get lots of high quality fresh produce and at a great price. In the summer for example, we often eat a lot of raw zucchini with tomato-based dressing. Dr. Rick has been known to shred up 6-8 zucchini into a large mixing bowl which he tops with his favorite tomato dressing for dinner.

B) WHOLESALE PRODUCE MARKETS

We have visited wholesale markets in both the San Francisco bay area and the New York metro area. We live in the SF bay area, so when we buy from our local wholesale produce market we buy enough food to last the two of us about 2 weeks. Why so much? The food available at wholesale markets is sold in boxes or cases. This works well for us because the produce is so fresh, that it lasts for often weeks at a time in our large-capacity dedicated refrigerator.

On average, we spend about 50% less on produce from the wholesale markets than we would spend on the same amount of food at a natural foods retail market or average farmers market prices. A good example is organically grown Romaine lettuce, which at our local farmers market and in a retail store in our area cost about \$2 or more per head. We recently, in the summer of 2015, paid \$21 for a 24 head case of very fresh organically grown Romaine lettuce. This price does vary depending on the season. Sometimes cases of romaine may cost \$40 or more, but the retail prices at that time are more like \$3 per head. It is interesting to note that the romaine lettuce in retail markets are often much smaller than those sold at wholesale, because they are not as fresh and have had several of the outer leaves picked off. We have found that when we buy lettuce at wholesale, the heads are very large, since very few, if any of the outer leaves have been removed.

The wholesale markets we have visited often have a wide variety of produce, since there are many produce vendors who obtain their food from local, domestic, and international farmers. We really enjoy going to the wholesale markets because of the wide variety of food available, especially organic and locally produced. A very large percentage of the food that we eat is organically grown and local.



This is one of the benefits for us of living in a major metropolitan area of California where we can access the year-round wholesale produce markets and farmers markets.

Wholesale produce markets are usually further away from home than local retailers, and often are open during overnight hours instead of during the day. While this can present some challenges, we have found it well worth the effort, as for the next two weeks or so we barely have to buy anything in a retail store, have fresher food, and save thousands of dollars per year. On the whole it is also much more convenient to purchase a car-load of food in cases, as opposed to having to run all of that food through a retail cash register. We would often find it a struggle to load up all the produce on the conveyer belt that was not nearly large enough for all of the food, and try to supervise the bagger not to damage any of the produce. At the wholesale produce markets, those issues don't exist. You either carry the cases yourself, which is great exercise, or if you purchase larger quantities the sellers may bring your order on a pallet right to your car, as we have experienced. Everything is well-packed, protected, and easy to transport.

It is important to mention that wholesale produce sellers are often located in industrial areas with loading docks. It is sometimes very noisy with trucks and pallet loaders zipping around, so while shopping, we have to be constantly aware of our surroundings. We are fine with that, as it is well worth it on the whole to get large quantities of very fresh produce very conveniently at about half the price of retail. We are very fortunate to have Earl's Organic Produce in San Francisco, as it is a safe, non-smoking wholesaler, and we know most of the people there at this point, as we have been "regulars" for many years.

We have spoken to some of our students who have considered purchasing food at wholesale markets, but think that cases of produce would provide too much food for them, so they have thought of starting:

C) PRODUCE BUYING CLUBS

This strategy allows one to buy fresh produce in quantity with a group of people, who then share the produce. This can help keep produce costs down, while not having to buy individually in such large quantities. Dr. Rick started a produce buying club with a friend while in graduate school. They ordered produce for the group weekly and people would come over to their apartment and pick up their order on specified days. This model worked reasonably well, most of the time. Rick found that the biggest challenge was people in the group not picking up their produce at the specified times, and people would be coming over at times he needed to study.

He did have a busy schedule between work and school, so the hours that he was available for pick up were somewhat limited. Also, although there was a minimum order, he had many people in the club who would buy small quantities such as a bag of raisins and a few apples, which meant more small transactions taking up a lot of time. Also, back in the mid 90's, before the use of personal computers and the internet were widespread, there were a lot of logistics that made things a lot more complicated than they are today.

We think this model would work well for a small group of committed people with pick-up hours amenable to all group members. One could maybe even share the produce pick-up or delivery responsibilities. In the past few years we have seen many examples of produce buying clubs that work well. We occasionally do some of this informally, such as when we buy a whole case of avocados, which is a lot for us. We'll typically call some produce-based raw food friends and see if they would like to buy half the case from us. Another example is at times we have split a 20 pound case of dulse with one or more raw food enthusiast friends who live in our area.

D) COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE (CSA) PROGRAMS

In this type of program, one "buys in" to the harvest of a local grower or group of growers. Each week when the produce is harvested it is split up among the CSA members who pick up the produce at a specified time and place. This often results in being able to obtain the freshest and most local produce available. We have admittedly not taken advantage of any such programs in our area, as our other methods work well for us.

E) COSTCO AND OTHER WHOLESALE CLUBS

We are delighted that Costco has been increasing its offerings of organic produce over the past few years. We often use Costco for produce purchases to "fill in" between trips to our organic wholesale supplier. We can buy for example some green and some yellow bananas to for staggered ripening so we almost always have ripe bananas available to eat and use in smoothies. Costco also has an excellent selection of organically grown frozen fruit such as mangoes and berries for making smoothies. The prices at Costco are comparable to what we find at wholesale produce markets, often approaching half the price of retail natural food markets. When you don't need an entire case of something, Costco can come in handy as well.

For example, we rarely ever purchase a 25 pound bag of carrots at our wholesale supplier, but Costco has 10 pound bags of organically grown carrots for almost the same price our local natural food market sells 5 pound bags of organically grown carrots. It's even the same brand!

Other wholesale clubs are following suit so it may be worth checking out those in your area.

F) MAIL ORDER

There are times and circumstances that purchasing food through the mail may make sense. For example, about 6 months ago we started buying organically grown dried tomatoes through the mail from a company that has been around since before our early days of raw food eating. We use the dried tomatoes in tomato-based salad dressings to add thickness and concentrated flavor. We like the tomatoes more and can get better prices than those that we were previously purchasing from our wholesale organic supplier.

Here is another tip that will interest some of you. Many of you have heard that raw almonds can no longer be sold at retail stores. However, you can buy raw almonds directly from farmers, including mail order. Although almonds are not a staple in our diets, we do occasionally enjoy them, and we have at times purchased a bag through the mail directly from a farmer who sells organically grown raw almonds.



Since we live in northern California, we take advantage of our year-round growing season and have our own:

G) OUTDOOR GARDEN

We are so thrilled to be able to grow all kinds of food year-round in our own yard! Of course, since we live in northern California somewhat close to the coast, we do have some limitations. We can grow lettuce, tree collard greens, kale, and other leafy greens year round. In the spring, summer, and fall, we grow tomatoes, cucumbers, summer squash and zucchini, sunflowers, Jerusalem artichokes, basil and other culinary herbs, grapes, and bell peppers, just to name a few. We also have fig, lemon, and lime trees. At some point we plan to plant a persimmon tree and other fruit trees that grow well here in this Mediterranean climate. Even though we can grow food year round, some years we have experienced an occasional frost, so we are prepared with coverings for our most vulnerable plants. From mid-summer to early fall we often skip buying any lettuce, tomatoes, or zucchini as our garden supplies more than enough for us. We rarely ever buy kale or collards as we have a consistent year round supply in the back yard.



At various times, we have had an:

H) INDOOR GARDEN

In the past we have grown wheatgrass and sunflower greens indoors. Admittedly, we go through phases with indoor gardening and our endeavors have been much more off than on, but whenever we grow food indoors we find it to be very rewarding. There are so many foods that can be grown indoors in small spaces. We have visited people who live in large cities and have very little space to grow food, but they have very successful indoor gardens. Indoor gardens can also be aesthetically beautiful while giving a space an 'aliveness' that plants can provide.

Dr. Karin personally gets great satisfaction from gardening, which very likely started in childhood, when her dad involved her in planting and caring for the family backyard garden. From a young age, she had the experience of knowing how plant foods are grown and had a great appreciation for this process. We can only hope that many of you will give yourself and your family the opportunity to grow food, even if it is as simple as growing a culinary herb on a window sill.

I) OTHER FOOD SOURCES

Of course, there are also the obvious other places to buy whole natural plant foods such as local food co-ops, natural food restaurants, natural food markets, and the organic sections of regular supermarkets. Nowadays, there are so many options available in different areas. Check out the options in your area, or perhaps there will even be opportunities to create some of your own.

Even if you don't take advantage of the methods above, eating a raw food diet in the modern world is still very feasible and extremely well worth it! For years we each, both before and after we became a couple, purchased most of our food from retail stores and that worked just fine for us. Freshness, greater abundance, and lower cost is great, but even at retail one can still make eating a raw food diet work in the real world. In other words don't let anything said here become the limiting factor in your pursuit of health.

Which brings us to our next section...

7 - GO FOR IT, BUT DON'T WORRY ABOUT BEING PERFECT!

While we feel it is well worth the effort required to eat a raw plant-based diet in the modern world, we have seen some people in the raw food community take their pursuit of health to levels that seem extreme to us. For example, when virtually everything you come across is considered to be bad, toxic, or hazardous, you can start to feel too limited and too stressed, which can be counterproductive to the pursuit of optimal health, as stress is a major detriment to well-being.



Often times, people who feel challenged by healthy habits may criticize the choices of others. They know at some level that what you or others who engage in healthful habits are doing (and not doing) is more healthful than what they are doing. The point here is that it's worth making health promoting changes. Your reward of improved health and well-being would make all of your effort worthwhile.

The bottom line is to do the best you can within reason, but don't drive yourself crazy. Commit yourself to excellence in health, and all other endeavors in life for that matter, but don't push so far that it becomes unnecessarily stressful or unproductive. You should not feel as though you have put yourself in jail in order to pursue health. That is not what health is all about. It's about feeling vibrant and abundant and vital and enjoying your life to the fullest extent. As you continue down the path of health, what once seemed difficult and potentially restrictive can seem very achievable and be handled gracefully. In addition to the physical health benefits of eating a healthy raw plant-based diet and engaging in other health promoting activities, overcoming challenges is rewarding and builds self-esteem, but being stressed about it is counterproductive. How this plays out in the real world will be different for each individual and in each different circumstance, so discretion and good judgement will be required. Remember, life is a journey, not a destination ☺

8 - REMIND YOURSELF OF ALL REWARDS YOU WILL REAP.

Remember all the personal reasons why you are eating a raw food diet. The more the reasons, the more incentive you'll have to stick with it over the long term. People have reported that they experience an increased sense of well-being, improved athletic performance, improved mental clarity, increased self-esteem by having overcome the challenges required to rise above their norm. They report that they feel better, they look better, they get more out of themselves, and the list goes on.



Taking time to remind yourself of all these benefits regularly will help keep you on track and keep your brain wrapped around all the positive reasons to maintain a raw plant-based diet and lifestyle. Then when the challenges come up you'll have an arsenal of incentive to help rise above them. I can remember back in my (Dr. Rick's) early days of making positive healthful changes and working away from the unhealthful ones, which at times seemed difficult, I kept one major theme in mind that was a constant source of inspiration for me: "The bigger the challenge, the greater the reward!"

9 - REMEMBER THE BIG PICTURE.

In addition to remembering all the rewards you will reap personally, it's also a great idea to remind yourself of all the other good you are doing by eating a raw food plant-based diet. Just as in the previous section, the greater the reasons, the more incentive you'll have to stick with it over the long term. Common examples include not harming animals and leaving a lighter footprint on the earth. Engaging in complementary non-dietary aspects of these important areas can work together synergistically with a raw vegan diet. Examples include re-using your produce and grocery bags and other items, driving a fuel efficient or alternative fuel vehicle, reducing your use of items that take resources from the planet, recycling, and being kind to yourself and others. The more of those types of behaviors you engage in that are so congruent with a raw vegan diet and lifestyle, the more truly holistic and synergistic it all becomes. People who do many or all of these things generally start to feel more of a connection to the world around them. Incentive, incentive, incentive!



10 - FIND SUPPORT.



Back when we started our health journeys in the mid to late 1980's, there weren't nearly as many resources available for connecting with other raw food enthusiasts as there are today. For that matter there weren't nearly as many raw foodists as there are today. People did not own computers. The internet was in its infancy and most people, ourselves included, had never even heard of it. There were no websites, smartphones, social media, etc. But there were resources. There were books and raw food potlucks. There was the American Natural Hygiene Society and the Life Science Institute, who each had magazines, books for sale, and offered regional and national conferences where we could go to hear speakers talk about various health topics. You couldn't be on their email lists but they did send notices in the mail about their events and other offerings. There were speakers from the Hippocrates Health Institute who would give presentations from time to time as well.

In my (Dr. Rick's) junior year of college, I skipped "Spring Weekend," when my whole college campus was one big party. Well known bands came to play and everyone was having a great time. Instead, I drove 4-5 hours away with my brother to Philadelphia to attend a Life Science Institute weekend seminar. My friends could not believe I was skipping the coolest weekend of the year to go to a fruit and vegetable conference! But I had a great time. I learned a lot of new things and became even

more inspired. I'm sure my friends back at school had a great time also, but they drank so much they probably didn't even remember a lot of what had happened.

Dr. Karin attended several American Natural Hygiene Society conferences as well. We both read lots of books and research on the subjects, purchased and listened to many programs, and attended conferences and local raw food potlucks. There were more than enough support resources available for us to learn about raw food and health and to meet other like-minded people to connect with. (At some point we'll have to share how we originally met back in 1990)

Today of course with Facebook groups, summits, YouTube channels, Instagram, and other social media it is easier than ever to learn about raw food nutrition and find like-minded people. There are also plenty of classes, events, festivals and other raw food events where we can all gather and connect with each other in person. It has been a great pleasure for example for us to connect with 1000's of our Science of Raw Food Nutrition students over the past 10 years, as well as people we have met at other classes we teach and events in which we have participated. It's always fun to meet people in person who have watched our videos, read our articles, and to meet people we have learned from as well.

As shared in strategy #1 however, the percentage of information available about raw food nutrition these days that is accurate and useful is much smaller than it was back in the early days for us. With so many resources available, a lot of health information is disseminated, a great deal of which is based on a lack of the whole picture, is taken out of context, or is inaccurate. People join programs that tell them how to become a health teacher even if they have no experience in the health field! So enjoy the resources available, but don't be gullible. With inaccurate information you may not take the most appropriate actions for long term success. We want you to succeed!! Approach everything with open minded skepticism. As Dr. Rick's dad used to say to him and his brother growing up, "be discerning!"

11 - GET TESTED.

How do you know if the approach you are taking is working for you? Some of the ways to determine this are subjective, while others are objective. Examples of subjective measures include self-reported energy level, aches and pains, and others. Objective measures can include useful resources such as lab testing. There are many things lab testing can reveal that you cannot feel in your body. If you are low in vitamin B12 for example, it may be many years, or even decades,



before you actually feel the results of it. In the case of B12 deficiency, by the time one develops certain symptoms, the deficiency may have progressed to very advanced levels which can lead to serious neurological problems, some of which can be irreversible if they go for too long. Lab results, analyzed by a qualified clinician (we can't stress enough how important that part of it is) can reveal potential issues long before they ever become problems.

Lab testing can help you fine tune and individualize your program in a way that works best for you. It can make sure you are on the healthiest track instead of a track that will lead to problems, or is not allowing you to experience your highest level of health and well-being. It is such a pleasure for us to work with fellow raw foodists in this regard. We fill a niche in that we are well educated, responsible clinicians who are well-versed in ordering and interpreting lab work and understand your dietary choices.

When appropriate lab work is analyzed in an educated, intelligent, rational manner, it can be extremely useful. How do you know if you are getting enough iron, vitamin B12, vitamin D, omega 3's, sodium, potassium, iodine, zinc, selenium, and calcium? Or could you be getting too much of some of these nutrients? Is your lipid profile healthy? Are there any signs of anemia? Should you eat more fat or less fat, more fruit or less fruit? Is your body regulating your blood sugar properly?

Is your thyroid gland functioning properly? Should you take a supplement or do you not have to? All of these questions can be answered with lab work analyzed appropriately.

Some will argue that lab work is not useful for raw vegans because the reference ranges are based on the general standard western diet eating population. There are very specific instances where raw vegans don't always fall within the normal reference range. But that does not mean the tests themselves are useless, it simply means that raw vegans have different reference ranges than the general population does for very certain specific measurements. When practitioners like ourselves have seen lab work results on hundreds of patients who eat conventionally, as well as hundreds of raw food vegans, it becomes very obvious where the reference ranges need to be modified. Just because one small adjustment has to be made, does not invalidate the need for lab work. This is just one of example of what we mean when we say lab work has to be analyzed appropriately. Often times we have seen raw vegans out of range for something very important, but they will ignore it because they don't think it is relevant to them. This is a huge mistake, and with appropriate guidance they could have avoided the mistake.

If we may be of assistance to you in helping you be as healthy as possible utilizing lab work and other methods, it would be our pleasure to do so. If you are so inclined, you can check out www.rawfoodconsulting.com to learn more about our services.

12 - DON'T BE AFRAID TO CHANGE AS YOU GO ALONG.

As stated above, someone interested in the benefits of a raw food diet will often embark upon their journey by subscribing to a ready-made approach to raw food. For many people who have started before you, the approach may be working well. You'd like to get the results they are experiencing, so you figure if you do the same things, you'll get the same results. While this is often the case, it is not always the case. In our consulting practice, we have been amazed at times by reviewing the blood chemistry results of raw food couples who eat the same way. The approach they take together may be working well for one of them but not always the other.



Let's look at a fairly simple and obvious example. Let's say we have a couple who focus their diet on fruit but do not eat enough vegetables and very well may be consuming borderline amounts of iron. If this is the case, the woman may end up anemic due to iron deficiency while the man may be fine. Women of childbearing years need more iron than men. Other times the man may end up deficient in a particular nutrient, if his needs are greater than hers and the extra food he likely consumes does not supply what he needs. Other times, different readings have nothing to do with gender differences, and are simply a matter of individual biochemistry. We have even seen some notable differences in individuals who have very similar diets, activity levels, and lifestyles.

Let's say the person for whom the diet is not working decides to make a change. They go back to the "drawing board," which may be the internet, to find a different approach to raw food or health in general. If they find something different and make some changes that work for them, that's great. The person taking the new approach may convince their partner to use the new approach as well. If that doesn't work for them, they may either go back to the previous approach or abandon it altogether.

With proper guidance, we often can find how to resolve the issue without having to go to another extreme. With iron for example, it may simply be a matter of which greens are chosen to eat. The couple can still enjoy their salads together, with each one having a slightly different mix of vegetables. In other words, sometimes relatively small yet nutritionally significant changes can make all the difference.

The bottom line is to find an approach that gives you the results you seek, instead of continuing with someone else's approach that may or may not be working for you, simply because you think this is the way it's supposed to be or someone tells you this is how it has to be. Don't be afraid to find what works best for you, and don't be afraid to get some professional guidance to help you when needed or desired. We would be glad to be of service to you in that regard! We can often find a solution within a particular approach if that is desired, or help you to make sense of a slightly different approach if we believe that will ultimately be in your best interest.

We wish you the best of health!

Drs. Rick and Karin Dina, D.C.

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