

Raw Foods in Traditional Chinese Medicine

By [Cathy Wong](#), About.com Guide

Although raw fruits and vegetables are usually considered beneficial, in [traditional Chinese medicine](#), eating too many raw fruits and vegetables can cause an imbalance in the body. That's because different foods are thought to have different energies, from cold to neutral to hot.

Raw fruits and vegetables possess cool energy. According to traditional Chinese medicine, overconsumption can result in symptoms such as chilliness, mucus, congestion, fatigue and depletion, feeling cold, abdominal pain, poor appetite and bloating after meals.

These symptoms are believed to improve when people change their diets by reducing their intake of raw fruits and vegetables, cold water and cold dairy products.

In traditional Chinese medicine, the optimal ratio of raw to cooked foods is individual. Animal protein is very warming, so people who eat meat everyday are thought to be able to handle more raw foods. Vegetarians, on the other hand, are thought to be able to eat less raw foods because they don't consume animal protein.

Climate also determines the optimal balance. In the winter, our bodies need a warming, enriching diet to balance the damp, windy, and cold weather.

Here are some suggestions on how to warm your diet:

1. Cook vegetables, especially in cold weather.

Cooked foods have absorbed the heat of cooking and are believed to generate body heat and stimulate circulation. Try preparing foods by steaming, stewing and baking.

Most cool to Most warm

Raw, fresh ---> Raw, dried ---> Steamed---> Sautéed---> Baked

2. Drink room temperature or warm fluids. Avoid cold drinks.

Many people drink copious amounts of cold water, which can throw off the body's balance.

3. Ensure that you are eating adequate protein.

Protein is an important source of heat and energy. The recommended daily allowance (RDA) for protein is 0.8 g per kg of body weight per day.

Most cool to Most warm

Fruit-->Vegetables-->Roots, Tubers-->Grains-->Seeds-->Nuts-->Dairy, seafood, meat

4. Eat foods with a warming energy.

Black and white pepper, ginger, garlic, cayenne, walnuts, green onions, and chili peppers are particularly warm and stimulating.

- Nutmeg
- Squash
- Sunflower seeds
- Walnuts
- Chestnut
- Brown sugar
- Clove
- Coconut
- Dates
- Fresh Ginger
- Coriander
- Chives
- Rice wine or vinegar
- Cinnamon
- Black pepper
- Green/red pepper
- Caraway
- Mustard greens
- Pine nuts
- Rice milk
- Parsley
- Cayenne
- Turmeric

Reference website: http://altmedicine.about.com/cs/dietarytherapy/a/Raw_Foods.htm