



Karen Ranzi explains how parents can turn around their children's poor diets and reverse their emotional reactions to food toxicity

**N**utritional studies connect reactions to allergens in certain foods and the excessive consumption of refined sugar as the two major causes of mood swings in children. These reactions to certain food substances can cause a chronic state of tension throughout the nervous system. Varying degrees of depression can also result from these allergic/addictive reactions to toxic foods. Research has demonstrated that people allergic to wheat can become depressed

soon after eating it, or even a few days afterwards. It is well known that processed and refined sugars increase the blood sugar level too rapidly. The levels will inevitably soon drop, leaving one depressed, irritable, confused or angry.

The increasing consumption of cooked and processed fast foods is another cause of anxiety, frustration and mood swings. These foods lack the nutritional density the body requires to feel truly satisfied. This deficient state has been termed "cellular starvation".

FAST FOODS  
 CHILDREN'S  
 CHOICE  
 REFINED SUGAR  
 FOODS BENEFITS  
 FRESH HEALTH  
 PEER PRESSURE

After an abundance of cooked and processed food is eaten, the body is malnourished, feeling empty and depleted. Since our emotional and physical states are closely related, this physiological malnourishment is revealed in an unbalanced emotional state, displayed as irritability, anger or depression.

Foods are either acid-forming or alkaline-forming. Human blood is slightly alkaline and requires an alkaline pH. Ingestion of animal flesh and animal products, heated fats, glutinous grains, refined and processed foods, and most cooked foods causes an acidic condition. These foods are not easily assimilated and cause toxic waste to be formed. Research has shown that a more alkaline-forming regimen results in a calmer, more serene person. Eating raw, living vegan foods result in a more alkaline pH level. When cooked and processed foods are significantly decreased and fresh plant foods are increased, chronic emotional, mental and/or physical problems can be reversed and eliminated.

#### Peer pressure

After having eaten raw foods since ages three and five, my children began experimenting with eating cooked vegan foods at ages 11 and 13, when frequently confronted with conventional

foods. Their friends and peers often made fun of the healthful foods they were eating, which made them want to fit in with their peers. What they perceived as 'peer pressure' in their teen years was quite intense.

When children are young, their parents are the centre of their universe. The parents' model is key, as 'actions speak louder than words'. Parents need to exude confidence that the raw food lifestyle is nutritionally and scientifically sound. This conviction will have a profound effect on family life, and whether the children will desire to follow their parents' example when they mature.

Most children will eventually be influenced by the cultural values they perceive. As time goes on, their developing ecological awareness, coupled with the growth of the raw food movement internationally, will positively benefit families living a natural life. With increasing public awareness that disease need not be fought with drugs but prevented through healthful eating and lifestyle, I'm confident the raw vegan lifestyle will eventually be considered the norm.

Children who have been eating healthful vegan foods for many years will quickly react negatively to processed and refined foods. This provides an opportunity for

the parent to lovingly discuss the consequences of eating unnatural foods with the child. Although I often found it difficult to remain calm after my children partook of junk foods at birthday parties, I've learned from experience that children will react defensively to a parent who is out of emotional control. Showing interest in their feelings, even validating them, and listening to their interpretation of the situation proves most beneficial in gaining the child's willingness to consider the parents' views of health and wellness and their importance to the child's proper development.

If a child is "acting out", it's best for the parents to react constructively and calmly. Make sure to make eye contact when speaking with the child to let him or her know that he/she is an important

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person, even in times of emotional instability. Coercion only causes anger and defiance. We love our children and want them to be emotionally and spiritually healthy as well as physically healthy. Creating the very delicate balance needed to bring this to fruition can sometimes be frustrating to a parent who steadfastly practises the raw vegan lifestyle for a healthy future.

In letting our children make their own decisions regarding food choices when exposed to the conventional toxic fare, we have to realise that these unhealthy foods may well contain opiates, monosodium glutamate, hydrogenated oils (trans fats), dangerous preservatives and colourings, aspartame and other poisonous substances, often hidden on ingredient labels. So far, despite the international efforts of the World Health Organization, acrylamide (a carcinogenic plastic) is never even mentioned on labels in the US, even on packages of foods loaded with acrylamide, such as chips, pretzels and cookies.

### En famille

The implementation of a healthy raw food lifestyle will be beneficial for the entire family. Begin with healthful snacks, replacing the processed and refined snacks with fruit or vegetables with dips. Kids love delicious home-made dips with sliced veggies. And the perfect fast food couldn't be any easier and tastier than a bowl of colourful organic berries or a variety of sliced apples. Get your whole family involved with planting a garden, and later the children can participate in harvesting the abundance of delicious produce given to them directly by nature. Nothing expresses the vibrancy of living foods more than harvesting from your very own garden.

As you diminish the serving of cooked and processed foods and continue to augment fresh raw plant foods, the children's taste buds will gradually change and start to prefer fruits, leafy greens and vegetables over

foods requiring sauces and spreads, just to make them palatable. Have fruits and vegetables readily available in the room where everyone congregates, most often the kitchen. Place fruits and vegetables in pretty bowls and baskets, and hang posters and pictures of fruits and vegetables on the walls to depict and emphasise the foods you value most.

There are enormous benefits to maintaining a raw food lifestyle. Ideally, it is quick and easy, mainly featuring whole fresh, water-rich plant foods. Children raised in this way

who eventually diverge from this path will inevitably return because they'll remember the energy, mental clarity and emotional balance they used to enjoy in their raw plant food days. My daughter, at age 21, decided to listen to her inner wisdom and experience rather than simply to follow the crowd. She compared how she used to feel when growing up at home on raw vegan foods to her college days, when she yielded to the standard dietary indoctrination. She gained a deep insight: fresh fruits and vegetables are the optimal 'species specific' food for humans.

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#### Karen Ranzi

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*Attachment Parenting and Raw Foods*, contains further information on this topic.

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