



Raw Thyroid Balance

From Thyroid Issues to Raw Food Health

Can a raw thyroid be healthy and balanced?

There is a lot of confusing and conflicting information out there in regards to how a raw food diet affects the thyroid. Some people say that it is not a good idea to eat too much raw food if you have thyroid issues, and others swear by a raw food diet, saying that it has stabilized their thyroid gland in ways that years of prescription medicine were not able to.

A raw food diet can be followed if you have thyroid issues, but should be tweaked a little depending on if your thyroid runs underactive (hypo) or overactive (hyper).

Thyroid Overview

Our thyroid is a tiny gland, but affects our bodies in huge ways. The thyroid weighs less than one ounce and is found at the front of your neck, just below your Adam's apple. Its main job is to take iodine from the foods that you ingest and turn it into thyroid hormones (thyroxins) that get released into the bloodstream where they control your metabolism (how fast you turn oxygen and calories into energy). These thyroid hormones also control how sensitive the body should be to other hormones.

Hypoactive Thyroid

People that have an underactive thyroid usually have problems losing weight, run low in energy and their bodies can sometimes run cold. The thyroid does not produce sufficient hormones to signal the body to use calories for energy.

On a raw food diet, there are a few things to take into consideration if you have a hypoactive thyroid. One is to not overdo it on raw veggies that contain goitrogens, such as broccoli, cauliflower, kale or cabbage. The goitrogens interfere with your body's ability to absorb and use iodine, which means that it is not getting enough to signal the production of thyroid hormones.

Further compounding the problem is the fact that these goitrogen-high veggies are high in sulfur, which can mess with the delicate balance of copper and iron in your body. Sulfur, copper and iron all need to work together in certain quantities for optimal thyroid function.

Other foods that interrupt the thyroid's ability to work at its best include soy (which blocks the activity of an important enzyme called thyroid peroxidase), millet, peanuts and pine nuts, so these foods should only be consumed in small quantities by people with a hypoactive thyroid.

Foods that stimulate the thyroid gland are avocado, coconut and caffeine, for example found in dark chocolate. Saturated fats also stimulate the thyroid gland, but for obvious reasons these should be consumed in small amounts, and do not come up too often on a raw diet that does not include animal products anyway.

One thing to be aware of is to include warming foods to help offset the chilliness that someone with an underactive thyroid may feel. Fresh ginger, cayenne, black and white pepper, and green onions are especially stimulating and warming.

There's a good chance that people with a history of hypothyroidism may actually find themselves losing weight when they embark on a raw food diet. With a raw thyroid they will probably also have more energy than they have felt in years!

Hyperactive Thyroid

On the other end of the spectrum are the people whose thyroid works overtime, constantly sending out signals for the body to convert calories into energy. They may have a hard time keeping weight on, and may have so much energy that it may be difficult for them to unwind and get a good night's sleep.

With a raw food diet, people with hyperthyroidism need to be careful to get enough proteins and fats. If protein and fat is severely restricted, the thyroid ends up sending out too many hormones that tell the body to begin tapping into other energy reserves.

The use of good monounsaturated oils will provide your body with a high caloric intake, which is important to keep weight on. Good monounsaturated oils include.... olive oil, cashew nuts, macadamia nuts, and sesame oil

Huge consumption of fruits should be avoided, as they can be too light and cleansing for a body that needs to focus more on building and strengthening. Too much fruit consumption for a person with hyperthyroid can also cause them to fill without getting sufficient daily caloric intake to maintain their wired body.

Many people with an overactive thyroid try to limit thyroid output by restricting their iodine intake and eating more foods that have goitrogens (such as raw broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower.) This is not a smart strategy and will backfire, because a restriction in iodine actually makes the thyroid increase in size in an effort to filter more blood and get more iodine from there. What happens next is that when iodine does get re-introduced into the diet, the larger thyroid has the ability to be even more active and powerful than before, stimulating even more hormones to be made.

A better strategy would be to increase foods high in copper which help the body tolerate iodine without increasing its hormonal production. Sesame seeds and tahini, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, sun-dried tomatoes and dried basil all contain good amounts of copper and should be consumed regularly by those with hyperthyroidism.

Raw Thyroid Balance

There are many foods which are beneficial for both hypo- and hyperactive thyroids, because these foods have the ability to balance and regulate. Coconut oil, all forms of seaweeds, radishes, sprouts, oats and raisins all contain at least one enzyme or mineral that is crucial to optimal thyroid function.

In addition to diet, many doctors and schools of thought have noted the positive effect of deep meditative breathing on the thyroid. The breath passing over the thyroid gland (which remember, is right by your windpipe) helps to massage the gland gently and naturally. For an underactive thyroid, this action is stimulating, and for an overactive thyroid it is relaxing and calming.

Raw Thyroid Choices

There is no reason why a careful raw food diet cannot be followed by those with thyroid issues. Those on prescription medication may want to get tested for dosages more regularly as the body may heal and change very rapidly in response to a new way of eating. Medication amounts may be able to be lowered very quickly.

One of the benefits of a raw food diet is the ability to bring the body back into natural equilibrium. With a few modifications and adjustments depending on which end of the spectrum the thyroid is on, you may find yourself on the road to balance and wellness in no time!