

## RAW VS. COOKED FOODS

Whether or not to cook one's veggies is a very controversial topic. Raw vegetables, it turns out, may not give you all the nutrient benefits as perfectly cooked vegetables.

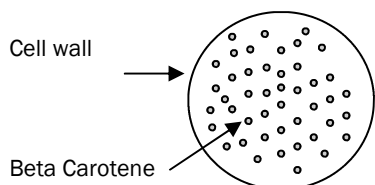
Remember: to be used by the body, anything you eat or drink has to get to 98.6° (normal body temperature). For example, if you put ice into your water, your body has to convert the water's temperature to 98.6° to make it usable.

From the point of view of western science, importance is placed upon what nutrients are *in* food, not what nutrients are *available* in food. For example, the emphasis is placed on how many units of Vitamin A your broccoli has, or how many units of Beta Carotene there are in your carrot.

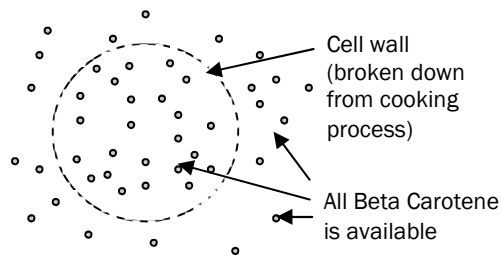
The viewpoint of Oriental Medicine is different: the basic concept is to get the greatest amount of a *useable* nutrient available from food *into* the body.

Example: You want Beta Carotene. You eat a carrot. You could eat it raw, or you could eat it cooked. When you eat a raw carrot, it has a lot of Beta Carotene, however, it isn't necessarily available to your body because it is surrounded by an indigestible cellulose structure (the cell wall).

When you cook a carrot (without overcooking it) to the degree that it becomes perfectly orange (the bright, amazing orange it shows when ideally done), the Beta Carotene is released because the cellulose structure is broken down by the cooking process. The vibrant orange indicates the Beta Carotene is useable to the body.



Carrot cell- raw



Carrot cell- cooked perfectly

Let's say you had a raw carrot (shown above left) and a perfectly cooked carrot- steamed, for example (shown above right), with 100 units of Beta Carotene in each. Much of the Beta Carotene is going to be unavailable in the raw carrot. With the carrot cooked to perfection, the cellulose structure is broken down and much more of the Beta Carotene is available. Only a small amount of the Beta Carotene will be destroyed. So, in the raw carrot example, you might get 20% of the Beta Carotene, whereas the perfectly cooked carrot would give you 80% of the available Beta Carotene. As you can see, cooking foods, especially vegetables, to perfection is much healthier than eating them raw. Obviously, an occasional salad or serving of raw vegetable is fine (more so in warmer months than cooler months, as the metabolism runs "hotter" in warm weather)!

For further reading, ask us for an office brochure called "Raw Meal, Raw Deal" in the office that discusses this concept.

Healthfully,

Curry D. Chaudoir, Diplomate in Acupuncture and Chinese Herbal Medicine