

## What Are Enzymes

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We've all seen a colony of ants. All those little workers rushing around doing their jobs. It seems so random, but they are each doing something very specific that needs to be done for the good of the whole colony.

That's what I imagine enzymes to be like. Enzymes are really proteins - hard working proteins. They are catalysts that facilitate and speed up the different reactions in the body. One of the jobs of digestive enzymes is to help break down the large molecules of fats, proteins, carbohydrates, and other components of the foods we eat.

If you experience gas, bloating, irregular bowels, burping, or other digestive discomforts after eating, you may be feeling the consequences of not enough digestive enzymes. Having enough enzymes - all the different types - is key to good health. Food is your body's fuel and incomplete digestion and assimilation of that fuel leads to mal-nourishment at the cellular level. If the cells aren't healthy the whole body suffers.

Digestive enzymes are naturally produced within your body. We also get enzymes from raw foods. Many children are eating lots of processed food on a daily basis. Processed food, even the healthier versions, are lacking those essential enzymes, which are heat sensitive.

Including raw foods (foods that have not been heated above 118 degrees Fahrenheit) is important because the enzymes are still viable.

The average American diet is responsible for the development of chronic degenerative diseases such as heart disease, atherosclerosis, cancer, diabetes, stroke, etc. Why is diet so important for our health? Because the food (and supplements) we consume provide our cells the nutrients to survive and function. That's why in holistic medicine we focus on the health of the gastro-intestinal (GI) tract, where the food is digested and assimilated into the body.

Throughout the GI tract, from the mouth through the intestines, enzymes are secreted from glands to help digest the fat, carbohydrates and proteins we eat. We also consume enzymes through RAW food. Enzymes are denatured (inactivated) by heat. So the enzymes in cooked food lose their function, which is to increase the rates of chemical reactions within the body.

**"Although the body can manufacture enzymes,  
the more you use your enzyme potential,**

**the faster it is going to run out..."**

**- Dr. Edward Howell (Noted Pioneer in the field of Enzyme Research)**

Supporting our body with RAW food, supports our enzyme supply. Raw foods contain all the enzymes necessary for their own digestion. Eating too much processed and cooked food and too little live, raw food can result in enzyme deficiencies. There is research to support the health benefits of enzymes, for example: Bromelain (an enzyme found in fresh pineapple) has been found to have anticoagulant and anti-inflammatory properties. Anti-inflammatory properties are huge since chronic inflammation has been linked to many diseases including allergies, asthma, heart disease, diabetes and cancer.

**Very Important:** Enzymes rely on vitamins and minerals to function properly.

**“Enzymes are complex proteins that act as catalysts in almost every biochemical process that takes place in the body. Their activity depends on the presence of adequate vitamins and minerals. Many enzymes incorporate a single molecule of a trace mineral —such as copper, iron or zinc —without which the enzyme cannot function.” Sally Fallon and Mary G. Enig, PhD**

Source: <http://www.nourishmd.com/>