



THE BENEFITS OF ACTIVATING NUTS & SEEDS

Image: A springtime almond blossom in all its glory

You may have heard that eating nuts and seeds are better for you when they are activated and it turns out to be true. This latest health tool can greatly increase the nutrient quality of your favourite nuts and seeds as well as improve their digestibility.

To activate nuts and seeds means to soak them in water overnight. This process unlocks nutrients and makes them easier to digest.

Nuts and seeds contain phytates, which is what phytic acid is called when it is bound to a mineral. These phytates are used to store and protect minerals for when it is time to grow a new plant. When the minerals such as iron, zinc and calcium are locked and stored, the body cannot easily use these minerals and many pass through still bound to the phytic acid. However, when a nut or seed is soaked, the phytates breakdown and release the minerals to allow for growth of a new seedling. These released minerals are then much more readily absorbed and used by the body to improve your health and wellness. Also, the small amount of phytic acid that goes into your body is actually beneficial. Research shows that it can be protective against kidney stones and can act as an anti-oxidant, protecting your cells from damage and slowing down ageing.

It is beneficial to soak every kind of nut and seed over night or at least for 7 hours to receive greater nutritional value. Soaking not only releases minerals, it also increases vitamins B2, B5, B6, Vitamin C and Vitamin A and will also inactivate enzyme inhibitors. These inhibitors reduce the action of our own digestive enzymes and can irritate the digestive system.

Activating will also predigest some of the complex starches, which will ease digestion and reduce intestinal gas.

When soaking, add a little salt to the water as this will aid the process of breaking down the phytates. Once you have soaked your nuts and seeds you can eat them as they are or dehydrate them on low heat to dry them out, whilst maintaining their nutritional value. My favourite nut to activate is the almond, as it maintains its crunchiness and has the highest level of phytates, making it much healthier to consume after activating. Sunflower and pumpkin seeds taste great soaked, becoming soft and juicy and are great eaten on their own or tossed through salads or even added to your favourite breakfast cereal.

Enjoy your week in the kitchen!

Jesabe Warner

Naturopath, Affordable Wholefoods