



TRUE JUICE

JUICING CAN HAVE A POSITIVE EFFECT ON YOUR
HEALTH IF YOU APPROACH IT THE RIGHT WAY.

by PATTI VERBANAS

“Eat your fruits and vegetables.” We all have heard this since we were children, but even those who understand the nutritional importance of these food groups—especially those of the nutrient-rich leafy green variety—are not always able to consume the daily amount that the human body requires.

Juicing has long been popular with the health-conscious and with those interested in shedding pounds. But it has never generated more mainstream interest than today as even corporate America has embraced the juicing movement with group juice cleanses and with juice fasts becoming *de rigueur* for corporate team-bonding. Celebrities and pop docs tout the reputed benefits of juicing, such as lowering cancer risk, boosting energy, stimulating the immune system, promoting weight loss and remedying vitamin deficiencies.

There’s some truth to all of the above, but one must approach juicing, as with any health regimen, armed with the knowledge of how to reap the most benefits and not undermine the goal. While juicing is not any healthier than eating fresh whole fruits and

vegetables, according to leading medical institutions like the Mayo Clinic, extracting juice from a higher volume of these foods does allow you to consume more vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients at one time. “Many Americans have vitamin deficiencies from not eating a nutritionally complete diet and eating more processed foods than whole foods, so juicing is a way for individuals to give their body nourishment that will help them reach an optimal level of health,” says Nicole Cormier, a Registered Dietician and author of *The Everything Juicing Book: All You Need to Create Delicious Juices for Optimum Health* and *201 Organic Smoothies & Juices for a Healthy Pregnancy*. “Juicing allows you to put vitamins and minerals into more readily absorbable form.”

However, juicing does remove healthy fiber found in whole food. This is one reason why professionals like Cormier recommend viewing juicing as a supplement to a whole-food diet, not as something that takes the place of eating fruits and vegetables, which provide necessary fiber.

And don’t consider juicing a quick fix to any health objective, stresses celebrity nutritionist Cherie Calbom. “There are people who think that they can have one little glass of juice and still eat ice cream, pizza and hamburgers and be healthy,” she says. “You also need to change your diet and incorporate raw foods.” Calbom, the author of titles such as *The Juice Lady’s Big Book of Juices and Green Smoothies* and *The Juice Lady’s Turbo Diet*, notes that the biggest misconception people have is thinking juicing means fruit juice. “I promote vegetable juicing, because it is lower in sugar,” she says. “You should always include dark, leafy green vegetables in your juice because that is what is missing from the American diet most of all. And if you make a tasty blend, you won’t even know they are there.” ▶



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Tasty Blends

Cormier suggests selecting two to three vegetables—one being green and one another kind—and add one to two fruits for taste. “For example, you can blend carrot, kale, ginger, lemon, beet and apple. The lemon and ginger are great juice additives, both in terms of flavor and benefit: The lemon can make your body more alkaline, and ginger is extremely good for your digestion and helps boost your immune system,” she says. “Your juice will dramatically change in terms of taste by adding an apple, pear or pineapple.”

But don’t just throw in any combination of vegetables and fruit and expect heaven in a cup. “Not following a recipe is what derails a lot of people,” says Calbom. “They could end up with something that might taste like motor oil, and they’ll be turned off on juicing. You can’t put in too much ginger or dark greens and have it taste good; you need to balance the ingredients.”

As you review recipes, take into consideration ingredients with high sugar content—and remember you’ll be getting multiple times the dose that you would consume by just eating the whole food. Consider: A medium piece of fruit has about 60 calories and yields approximately four ounces of

juice. A typical juice is usually 12 to 16 ounces. So, if your juice consists mainly of fruit, you are consuming more calories and sugar than you may realize. Sugar-laden juice could lead to diarrhea, uncomfortable abdominal fullness and other symptoms.

Those who need to be conscious of their sugar intake, such as those who are diabetic or who want to keep their weight in check, should refrain from incorporating high-sugar fruit like pineapple, watermelon, papaya, mango and oranges, notes Calbom. Also, some vegetables, like carrots and beets, are higher in sugar than others and should be juiced in moderation. Balance your mix with a recipe that includes an ingredient like cucumbers, which have a high water content and will produce a lot of juice to dilute the sugar.

Your juice is only as healthy as what you put into it. Calbom suggests reviewing the “Dirty Dozen” list—foods with the highest pesticide residue—found at ewg.org to determine which fruits and vegetables should be organic. “For example, apples are high in pesticides, so only use organic apples,” she says. “Also, peel non-organic cucumbers with waxed skin. The wax traps the pesticides beneath the skin, and you’ll end up with pesticide and wax in your juice.”

Photos: Getty Images/Lisa Thornberg, Getty Images/Oren Gornly



Fresh squeezed juice made with ginger, lemon, parsley, romaine lettuce.

Health Claims: Myth vs. Reality

So what about those cancer-prevention and weight-loss claims? According to the Stanford Cancer Institute, fresh juice is packed with cancer-fighting phytochemicals and vitamins in a readily absorbable form. For example, one cup of carrot juice provides most of the same nutrients found in five cups of chopped carrots, which would still need to be digested. “When you’re increasing your absorption of all these vitamins and minerals you are helping your body reach its optimal level of health,” explains Cormier. “You’re boosting your immune system, which will help your body fight off chronic illnesses and to start to heal itself from the inside out.”

Juicing as part of a weight loss regimen works in a few ways: It satisfies your body so you consume less, and over time, it retrains your palate so that you lose cravings for products like carbs and sweets. “People who juice say they are simply not as hungry,” says Calbom. “They were hungry because they were eating foods that did not give them the proper nutrients. Studies have shown that people who drink one to two glasses of vegetable juice a day lost four times the weight of people on the same American heart-healthy diet.”

That said, experts recommend staying away

from “juice cleanse” diets, in which all foods other than juice are excluded for a period of time. “To be successful with any weight-loss program, you have to develop your long-term plan and change your behaviors,” says Cormier. “People often make the mistake of relying on a juice cleanse without addressing their lifestyle behaviors. Remember, you will eventually have to transition back into food, and that will be difficult.”

For most, juicing is a healthy practice, but some individuals with chronic illnesses, such as diabetes, should check with their doctor before incorporating juicing into their diet. “If you plan on using juicing to lose weight and are on medications, let your doctor know,” recommends Cormier, “since your prescriptions may need to be adjusted.”

The Juicing Lifestyle

The key to a successful juicing regimen is to make it harmonize with your lifestyle. “For example, if you like to exercise in the morning, juice first thing so that you have the right amount of fuel for your workout without feeling bloated from fiber,” says Cormier, who suggests juicing is great for a mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack for nutrients between meals. >

She recommends enlisting a registered dietitian to help you determine how juicing can help you reach your goals.

Experts recommend consuming fresh juice soon after it's made to maximize the nutritional benefits and to reduce the risk of bacterial growth. "Juices' shelf life is about 24 hours," says Calbom, who notes that juices not exposed to oxygen can last 48 hours. "Oxygen, light and heat destroy the nutrients, so it's important to keep the juice cold, whether it's in a Thermos with insulation and glass, a cooler with ice or in a refrigerator. Do not expose it to light until you drink it." For those on the go, she recommends juicing over the weekend and freezing it in individual containers to thaw throughout the week.

Expert Tips

Even if you already juice, there is always something to learn. For example, Cormier recommends when juicing apples you remove the seeds, which are toxic, but include the stems. "All our nutrients come from the soil," she explains. "The nutrients go into the roots of the plants and travel through the stems—what I call "the nutritional highway"—before it reaches the produce we're juicing. So often people toss the stem without knowing it has a huge volume of nutrients."

Cormier also gives suggestions for that pulp you're not drinking: You can add some of it back into the juice for fiber, use it in another dish—carrot pulp is excellent in veggie burgers, she says—or compost it and return nutrients to the soil.

Selecting a Juicer

There are myriad juicers on the market. How do you choose? Start by determining if you prefer a centrifugal or masticating juicer, then look at the options on juicers that are important to you, like which ones allow you to control the amount of pulp you include or which ones are easiest to clean. "The centrifugal juicers spin, rip open the cells and eject the insoluble fiber one way and the juice the other; the masticating types press the juice out of the plant," explains Calbom, who notes that each type has its trade-offs. Centrifugal juicers create more friction and exposure to oxygen, which means the juices won't last as long, and the masticating juicers have a narrower spout at the top, requiring you to cut the ingredients into smaller pieces but the juices do last longer and have more nutrients. "If speed is important, then select a centrifugal type because it is faster and its wide mouth requires you to do less cutting," Calbom says.

Cormier recommends a cold-press, slow juicer, like those offered by Hurom or Norwalk. "Many juicers have blades on them that heat up and kill off some of the enzymes that are in the fruits and vegetables," she says. "A slow juicer or a cold-press juicer has a design that is more of a corkscrew, which also allows you to get a lot more volume of juice."

But ultimately, the type you should select is the one that works with your lifestyle. "The best juicer," Calbom says, "is the one that's easy to use, easy to clean and that you'll use every day." ♦



Green Lemonade

2 green apples
(green varieties are lower in sugar)
½ lemon, peeled if not organic
1 handful of your favorite greens,
such as chard or kale

Cut produce to fit your juicer's feed tube. Juice all ingredients and stir. Pour into a glass and drink as soon as possible.

—*The Juice Lady's Big Book of Juices and Green Smoothies*

Fruits and Vegetables:

How Much is Enough?

When it comes to the amount of nutrients required, everybody is different. Want to know the amount of each food group you need daily? Enter your information into the calculator on the United States Department of Agriculture's website to receive a customized Daily Food Plan: choosemyplate.gov/myplate/index.aspx

Photo: Courtesy Delicious Living Nutrition/Andrea Lynne Photography