

Beyond the Blender

What juicing can do for your health—and how to get started today

BY PAULA ANDRUSS

WE ALL KNOW how important it is to eat our vegetables—but what about drinking them? A growing number of women are turning to juicing as a way to improve diets and get healthier. (The practice is fast becoming a \$5 billion industry in the U.S., according to Barron's, and is expected to grow.)

Proponents recommend juicing as a way to get five servings of fruits and vegetables every day. And it has been shown to have other health benefits, such as increased energy and weight loss. But, like any other fad, juicing is not a cure-all or magical weight-loss solution. Before you jump on the "blendwagon," consider these points.

HEALTH MATTERS

"Juicing" is the act of turning raw fruits and vegetables into a drinkable form. The juices you make at home—versus the bottled, shelf-stable ones for sale at the grocery store—are packed with nutrients because they retain more of the vitamins, minerals and phytonutrients (plant chemicals) found in the whole fruits. And in liquid form, the nutrients are sometimes easier for the body to absorb.

Cherie Calbom, author of *The Juice Lady's Big Book of Juices and Green Smoothies*, says the benefits of juicing can range from increased energy and weight loss to better mood, improved digestion and even clearer skin.

"A lot of people don't eat enough fruits and vegetables;

some eat none at all; and most don't get the variety they need to get the full health benefits," she says. "Juice is a great way to get the different nutrients and (the) fuel your entire body needs to run right."

The practice can also be used as a weight-loss regimen. "Juicing can be part of healthful weight loss efforts by including a balanced combination of juices and meals, mini-meals, or snacks—such as two juices paired with mini-meals plus one meal and one snack—while making sure you're meeting minimum total calorie and protein needs," says Jackie Newgent, culinary nutritionist and author of *1,000 Low Calorie Recipes*.

you're planning to do your juice, make sure you also plan for some protein so everything's balanced throughout the course of the day."

Calbom and Newgent both emphasize that, while most people associate juice with fruits, a healthy juice diet consists largely of green juices made

Did you know? One cup of carrot or celery juice provides most of the same nutrients found in 5 cups of those same vegetables chopped up.



from vegetables. Sugar-laden fruits should make up far less of your blends.

Newgent suggests starting out with a cup of juice once a day, using more vegetables than fruit in the mix. "Carrots are relatively sweet for a vegetable, and then you could add some ginger and an apple, and maybe a little lemon juice or mint, too," she says. "Three or four ingredients is a good way to start, then you can build from there."

WHAT TO WATCH OUT FOR

You should know that juices that are too fruit-heavy can have dangerous sugar levels for people with certain health conditions, such as diabetes. And the extra calories in the juice can sabotage any hopes of losing weight.

As with any new diet, check with your medical provider before starting. And be aware of changes occurring within your body, says Newgent. "If you start juicing and begin to have headaches or feel fatigued, your body may be trying to tell you that it's not getting something it needs," she says. "You will definitely get nutritional benefits, but you need to make sure it's part of an overall healthy diet." ●



Try these commonly juiced fruits and veggies. They're easy to work with and offer optimum nutrition and taste.



GETTING STARTED

The first step is to find the right juice extractor for you. The two types of machines are centrifugal, which uses a fast-spinning metal blade and mesh filter to separate the juice from the flesh, and masticating (also known as cold press), which crushes the fruits and vegetables and then presses out the juice.

Both styles have pros and cons. For example, centrifugal juicers can be loud, while cold press juicers require the produce to be cut into smaller chunks. Calbom recommends choosing the one that works best for your lifestyle: "The best juicer is the one you actually use, so make sure it works for you," she says.

Newgent says it's also important to make sure the rest of your diet complements your juicing regimen so your body gets everything it needs.

"Make sure you plan the rest of your eating plan accordingly," Newgent says. "While you do get the nutritional benefits of the fruits and vegetables, you don't get the fiber that you would by eating the whole fruit, so you need to accommodate for that. Also, your body needs protein all the time, so when

Choosing a Juicer



The Breville Elite Juice Fountain claims to extract eight ounces of juice in just five seconds and can handle hard fruits and veggies just as easily as soft ones. \$299.95 at *Crate & Barrel*



Longtime juicing guru Jay Kordich has launched his own line of juicers. The PowerGrind Pro Longevity combines fast and slow juicing technology, and can also make one-step nut, seed and grain milks. \$299.95 at *Kohl's*



Wheatgrass can be masticated with this manual wheatgrass juicer, which uses a slow grind to preserve nutrients. It also extracts from spinach, kale and other greens, soft fruits and vegetables. \$99.99 at *Bed, Bath & Beyond*