

Should I Try... Juicing?

From green drinks at coffee bars to juice recipes spreading across Pinterest, pulverized produce is having a moment. Is it worth making a daily habit? We pressed the pros.

By **MAGGIE PUNIEWSKA**

Here's to your heart!

Juices with naturally occurring nitrates—found in cabbage, fennel and beets—may help lower blood pressure.

➔ **SAYING YOU HAD A “LIQUID lunch”** used to be a cheeky way of owning up to a midday martini. But these days it suggests you're downing a far more wholesome beverage: juice. Celebs, trainers, foodies and anyone trying to eat healthier rave about how the concoctions have improved their health, giving them whittled-down waists, powered-up immunity and supercharged energy. (We're not talking about the more extreme, solid-food-eschewing multiday juice fasts, because you already know to steer clear of them.) So are there health reasons to drop \$5 to \$10 a day on a bright green smoothie? Should you upgrade from a basic blender to an industrial-strength juicer? Here's the lowdown on what juicing can—and can't—do for you.

The Blender-Friendly Juice

In a blender, combine **½ cup packed baby spinach**, **½ cup packed torn kale leaves**, **½ cup frozen green grapes**, **½ peeled and chopped frozen banana**, **½ cored and chopped unpeeled Fuji apple**, **½ peeled and seeded orange**, **½ cup water** and **½ tsp. chia seeds**. Cover and blend on low speed for 1 minute. Add **1 cup ice** and blend on medium until smooth. Serves 2.
Recipe from Michael Roizen, MD



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Is there any real health benefit to juicing?

→ Fresh juice has definite perks, whether you’re buying it premade or pulverizing at home. Chief among them: It helps you get your five cups of produce a day, the target that the U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends for most people but that few of us manage to hit. Loading up on fruits and veggies helps ward off heart disease and reduce the risk of colon and other cancers. If you’re a picky eater, you may get an even bigger benefit. “It’s an easy way to increase your consumption of good foods that you may not eat otherwise, like kale or spinach,” points out Leo Galland, MD, an internist in New York City and author of *The Fat Resistance Diet*. While there’s no proof that a blend of fresh produce enhances your immunity, “starting your day well-hydrated and full of antioxidants can’t hurt, especially during cold and flu season,” says Dr. Galland. Drinking up might even improve your skin and mood—but not because you’ve found a magical elixir. The more likely explanation? You’re chugging vitamins and minerals that were missing from your diet.

“A smooth complexion could result from getting more vitamin C-rich produce, like pineapple and strawberries, which helps defend against damaging free radicals and aids the body in producing collagen,” explains Joy Bauer, RD. *Today* show nutritionist and author of *Food Cures*. As for that extra spring in your step, “it could be because you hadn’t been drinking enough fluids, which made you feel fatigued,” says Ellie Krieger, RD, author of *Weeknight Wonders: Delicious, Healthy Dinners in 30 Minutes or Less*.

What do I need to watch out for?

→ Gulping down your produce may be convenient, but it eliminates a key step: chewing. “Chewing kicks your digestive system into gear and helps slow you down so that you consume calories more slowly and gradually,” says Krieger.

And then there’s the fiber fallout. Traditional methods, like centrifugal juicing, get rid of the pulp and skin, a problem because “that’s where the fiber is,” notes Michael Roizen, MD, chief wellness officer at the Cleveland Clinic. Without fiber to slow its absorption, the sugar in fruit and some vegetables causes your blood sugar to spike and fall, leading to an energy crash and hunger surge later on. So if you’re juicing sweet fruit, balance out the sugar load with veggies like spinach or celery. To make a meal out of your blend, “add protein and healthy fats, like ground flaxseeds or chia,” advises Dr. Galland. Grabbing bottled juice on the go? Keep an eye on the calorie count and

ingredient list. Sugar has many aliases (such as cane juice, fructose and maltose). And some packaged 100 percent juices, as well as options at juice bars, contain nearly 200 calories per serving.

Should I get a fancy juicer? What is a cold-press one, anyway?

→ Unlike centrifugal juicers—which work via spinning blades—cold pressers crush produce and then squeeze the juice out of its pulp. Believers insist that

because this method doesn’t generate heat, it retains more of the foods’ nutrients. But experts aren’t convinced. “There’s no hard evidence to date,” says Bauer.

In fact, some folks are actually returning to the trusty blender. Pureeing your produce is a smart move, says Dr. Galland, because you keep the seeds and skin and preserve fiber. And it can be a money saver in more ways than one, notes Bauer: “If you’re blending, adding frozen fruit is a great way to get the most bang for your buck.” ■

Cut up all of the following so that they fit in a juicer: **2½ peeled small raw beets, 2 cups baby carrots** (about 20), **1 cored unpeeled small Gala apple, 1 ¼-inch-by-2-inch piece peeled fresh ginger** and **½ peeled and seeded medium lemon**.

Run all items through juicer. Serves 2.
Recipe from Joy Bauer, RD



Run ½ peeled and chopped pineapple and 1 medium cucumber through a juicer. Combine with ½ cup coconut water and garnish with 5 large fresh mint sprigs. Serves 2.

Recipe from Kitchen Revelry, by Ali Larter

Reclaim the fiber:

“Take a tablespoon or two of the cast-off pulp and put it back into your drink before sipping,” advises Bauer.

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