



TO JUICE OR NOT TO JUICE?

Depending on who you talk to, juice is either part of the latest health trend or on the list of things to avoid. Understanding what juice does and doesn't offer can help you decide if it is right for you.



The Up Side:

Fruits and vegetables offer a variety of health-promoting nutrients, many of which are still available in the juice squeezed from them. Juices can be a convenient and tasty way to get those nutrients. Juices also offer a way to get fruits and vegetables that you may not usually eat in the whole form. For example, cranberry juice is a popular alternative to whole cranberries and a great way to get some important antioxidants. People who don't normally eat spinach may find that when juiced with other vegetables and fruit, they enjoy it.



The Down Side:

With about 50-115 calories per cup, fruit and vegetable juices are not low calorie drinks. For that reason, drinking a lot of juice could potentially make weight management more difficult. Research suggests that people who drink juice don't necessarily have more trouble controlling their weight than people who skip juice, so moderation is likely important. Juicing leaves behind some important nutrients such as fiber, so it is important to also get fruits and vegetables in the whole form. If you are at risk for foodborne illness, the FDA suggests that you only drink pasteurized juices that have been treated to kill bacteria. If you choose to drink freshly squeezed juice that has not been pasteurized, it is important to drink it quickly after it is squeezed and make sure that good food safety practices are followed when handling the fruits, vegetables and juice.



The Bottom Line:

Juices offer a refreshing way to get more fruits and vegetables into your day. When choosing juices, look for pure juices that do not have added sugar or salt. True juices will list the amount of juice on the label as a percentage. "Drinks" and "Ade's" don't always contain juice and won't offer the same benefits. Keep an eye on portion sizes as calories can add up quickly at about 100 calories per cup for some of the most popular juices. Don't rely on juices alone to meet your fruit and vegetable requirements. Include whole fruits and vegetables too.

REFERENCES:

1. DA Hyson. A Review and Critical Analysis of the Scientific Literature Related to 100% Fruit Juice and Human Health. American Society for Nutrition. Adv. Nutr. 6: 37-51, 2015.
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