



# The Benefits of Juicing: A Look at the Latest Fad Diet

*Nutrient-dense juice can enhance your diet and your health. Discover the benefits of juicing with this inside look at the latest fad diet.*

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Incorporate a wide range of unusual fruits and vegetables into your juices to benefit from a wide range of nutrients.

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Juicing has blossomed into a major diet craze. In cities throughout the U.S., juice bars have seemingly popped up on every corner. Juice cleanses for detoxification and weight loss are all the rage among celebrities. Big chains like Starbucks have even announced their intention to get in on the action with the launch of a new chain of juice bars. But is juicing really good for us? As with many health fads, juicing is a healthy habit that can go wrong when taken to the extreme. But as part of a healthy diet and lifestyle, juicing can offer a major dose of antioxidants and vitamins.

## Raw Juice Recipes

- [Cosmic Coconut's Go Green Daily Detox Juice recipe](#)
- [Super Green Smoothie recipe](#)
- ["The Oxygenator" Carrot and Beet Juice recipe](#)

## Juice the Facts, Ma'am

Let's get right to it: Does juicing offer any real health benefits? Well, imagine sitting down to eat a bowl of raw kale, four celery stalks, a few carrots, an apple, a beet, a lemon and a hunk of ginger. Sound tasty?

We're not likely to ingest that many raw veggies and fruits in one sitting, regardless of their health benefits. But if we throw all of these nutritious veggies in a juicer, we get all the vitamins and minerals in a delicious drink we can happily sip anywhere. By extracting most of the plant fiber, the juicing process allows us to get a boatload of nutrients that would otherwise be nearly impossible to consume in one sitting. Of course fiber is also a crucial component of a healthy diet. When sacrificing fiber for the plentiful vitamins and minerals of raw juices, juicing enthusiasts should conscientiously incorporate fiber into their diet throughout the day via whole vegetables, fruits and grains, too. (That rules out juice fasts.)

Is there anything superior to the nutrients from juice versus whole plants? The short answer is no. But incorporating liquid nutrient consumption into your diet may offer some unique benefits: While there is no scientific evidence for the superiority of nutrient or enzyme delivery through juicing, digestion is one of the most energy-consuming functions in the body. In fact, according to Yuri Elkaim, nutritionist and author of *Eating for Energy*, digesting a meal—especially an unhealthy one—can expend up to 80 percent of our bodies' energy and take from 24 hours to as long as nine days. "Consider that every time your digestive process is impaired your body can end up spending 80 percent of its energy on digesting the meal that you've just eaten," he writes on his website, [totalwellnessconsulting.ca](http://totalwellnessconsulting.ca). "When this occurs the last thing you feel like doing is going for a walk or even being lightly active. How many times have you eaten a meal only to feel tired and lethargic thereafter?"

According to Norman Walker, author of *Fresh Vegetable and Fruit Juices*, when we drink raw vegetable juices, "the situation is entirely different as these [micronutrients] are digested and assimilated 10 to 15 minutes after we drink them and they are used almost entirely in the nourishment and regeneration of the cells and tissues, glands and organs of the body...The entire process of digestion and assimilation is completed with a maximum degree of speed and efficiency, and with a minimum of effort on the part of the digestive system." Supplementing the diet with raw juice and smoothies has anecdotally produced increased energy and tremendous health benefits for many people, but the best evidence is whether it works for you.

## Choose a Routine That's Right for You

Experimenting with juices and smoothies can be an easy and healthful boost to your daily routine—a quick and delicious way to take in much more plant-based vitamins, minerals and enzymes. Once you start to experiment, your body will tell you much of what you need to know. Notice how you feel after you eat or drink. Do you have increased energy and mental clarity or do you feel sluggish and bloated? Are you sleeping well or do you feel restless? We know that food has the power to heal and to harm our bodies. Try these juicing tips, experiment with raw juice recipes, listen to your body and have fun!

## 10 Juicing Tips

**1. Juices versus smoothies.** Juicers extract juice and remove most of the fiber from produce, whereas blenders incorporate all contents into smoothies. Green smoothies (smoothies that incorporate vegetables and fruits) are a great way to get most of the benefits of juice and keep the fiber, though digestion is not quite as

quick as with juice. Some vegetables (such as carrot or celery, for example) taste far superior as juice than they would as a smoothie.

**2. Get up and go.** Start your morning with a green juice or smoothie. The benefits of quick digestion and absorption are best felt on an empty stomach. Starting with your first meal makes it easier to evaluate how juicing makes you feel. Cosmic Coconut's Go Green Daily Detox makes an excellent breakfast.

**3. Just juice.** No matter the time of day, consume juices and smoothies on an empty stomach and give your body 30 minutes to digest before eating other foods. To maximize benefits of juicing, do not combine juices and smoothies with meals.

**4. Go green.** Dark, leafy greens are the powerhouses of the juice world. Incorporate as many of them in your juices and smoothies as you can to get the most bang for your drink. According to Jill Nussinow, a culinary educator and author of *The Veggie Queen*, greens are the No. 1 food you can eat regularly to help improve your health.

**5. Perfect complement.** Juiced greens alone may be unpalatable, so combine them with other vegetables and fruits. Lemon can cut the "grassy" taste, and apple adds sweetness and helps engage the gastric enzymes for quick digestion.

**6. Crop rotation.** You can find a wide variety of leafy greens, particularly if you frequent farmers markets. Different greens offer distinct nutritional benefits.

**7. Sugar shock.** Just as juicing retains the vitamins and minerals of fruits and vegetables, so too does it retain sugar and calories. Don't go overboard with fruit as you could easily consume more sugar and calories than you intended. Carrots and beets also have higher sugar content than other vegetables.

**8. Same-day delivery.** Don't keep juice longer than one day from the time you make it. It's best to drink it the same day to get maximum benefit from the live plant enzymes, vitamins and minerals. Because raw juice is not pasteurized, it can develop harmful bacteria if left unrefrigerated or kept longer than a few days.

**9. Bar fly.** If you're hesitant to invest in a juicer or blender and you're lucky enough to have a juice bar nearby, start your exploration there. Juice bar staffs tend to be knowledgeable and often have personal experience with the juicing lifestyle. Just be careful to avoid mainstream chains that use sugary syrups and mixers and are not actually making raw juices from fresh fruits and vegetables.

**10. Doctor knows best.** If you're considering a major change in your diet, with juice or otherwise, and you have any pre-existing health conditions or are taking prescription drugs, consult your health-care provider first.

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