

Juicing for good health

Caroline Beetz Fenske

Are you getting your five fruits and vegetables per day as recommended under the U.S. government's dietary guidelines? Available statistics indicate that your answer is probably no. Even if you are meeting or exceeding these guidelines, you may want to consider adding freshly made vegetable and fruit juices to your diet.

The practice of juicing dates back to ancient times, and has often been used for medicinal purposes. Today, juicing involves the blending and straining of 100 percent fresh, raw vegetables and fruits, and includes smoothies that use whole fruits. Blended juices are packed with important vitamins, minerals, and enzymes — many of which contain antioxidants believed to reduce

the risk of cancer and other diseases. It has also been reported that regular intake of vegetable and fruit juices is associated with better mental function, improved muscle and skin tone, and reduced rates of depression.

By drinking your fruits and vegetables, you give your digestive system a break, and the vitamins and minerals can be absorbed quickly into the blood stream. For those who do not enjoy eating raw veggies and fruit, juicing is a great alternative.

Buying freshly made juices or making them at home with a juicer is better than ordinary juice purchased in a store. Most store-bought juices are pasteurized to slow microbial growth. This process eliminates some of the nutritional benefits. In addition, by combining a variety of fruits and vegetables,

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the blended juices have far more nutrients than a single fruit or vegetable juice.

Dr. Oceana Rames, naturopathic physician of Church and Main Natural Therapies in Vineyard Haven recommends using both fruit and vegetables together in your juice.

"People tend to go for fruits or more dense vegetables like carrots, cucumbers, and celery," Ms. Rames says. "Things they tend to forget are the greens: kale, which is very high in calcium, lettuces, cilantro, parsley, watercress, which is very good for the liver, and other dark green vegetables that help with energy and detoxification."

Mary Gross, a dietician at the Martha's Vineyard Hospital, reminds us that drinking too much fruit juice "...can



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Roni DeLuz, creator of Martha's Vineyard Diet Detox, recommends drinking at least one glass of pure vegetable or fruit juice per day.

raise blood sugar even for non-diabetics, and is high in calories." She adds that juicing removes the pulp, eliminating an important source of fiber, and therefore is best to be undertaken in moderation. If you juice regularly, it is a good idea to supplement by eating a lot of whole grains, beans, whole fruits, and vegetables. Of the two, Ms. Gross sees more merit in vegetable juices, which can be packed with nutrients, without the sugar. The dietician also reminds us that if we are going to make juices at home, we need to start with quality produce, and suggests adding vegetables of different colors to maximize nutritional value.

Roni DeLuz, a naturopathic

doctor, registered nurse, colonic therapist, and creator of the Martha's Vineyard Diet Detox, is a strong proponent of juicing. Ms. DeLuz co-authored The New York Times best seller "21 Pounds in 21 Days," with another Island resident, James Hester. Their book contains a lot of good information about juicing. Ms. DeLuz has had many celebrity customers, including Gwyneth Paltrow and Madonna, and she appeared on "Larry King Live" in July 2007 to talk about the book.

When not detoxing, Ms. DeLuz recommends juicing at least once per day. "The main benefit of juicing is nutritional, although it's also a great way to control weight," she

says. For beginning juicers, Ms. DeLuz suggests starting with a great-tasting vegetable drink that includes spinach, kale, carrots or beets, cucumber, and garlic. She notes that a combination of strawberries, blueberries, and blackberries is also delicious, and is packed with antioxidants, although she recommends limiting the amount of fruit juice to four to six ounces per day.

Ms. DeLuz has identified combinations of fruits and vegetables to fight specific ailments. For the influenza virus, she advises juicing two times per day with a combination of ginger, garlic, alfalfa

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M.V. Hospital dietician Mary Gross suggests using quality produce to make healthy juices.

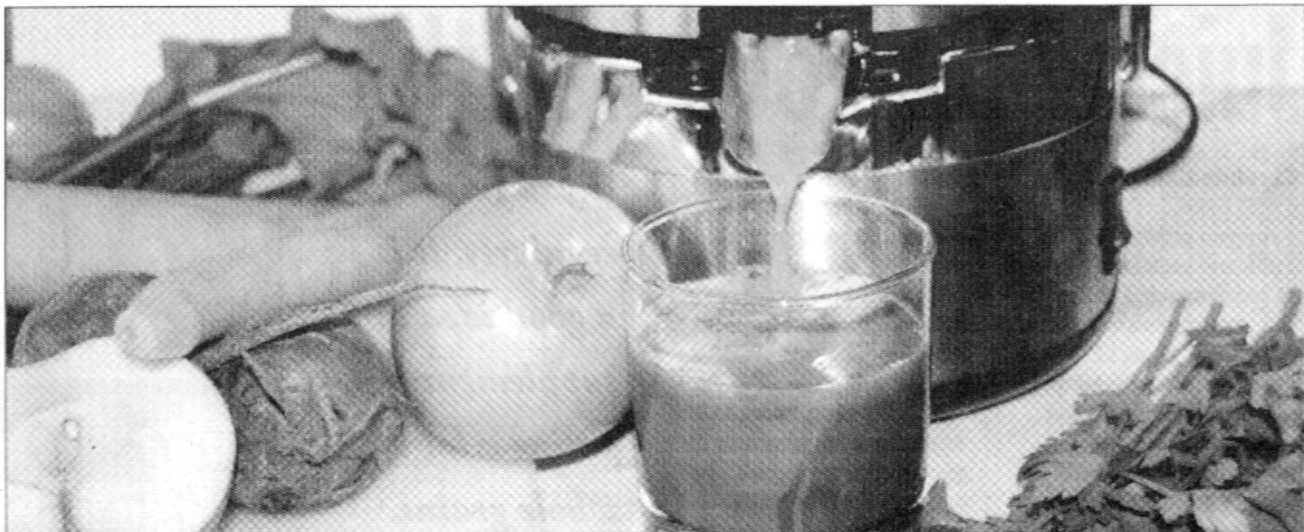


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Juicers range from \$60 for a basic model to over \$300 for the most advanced.

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sprouts, beet leaves or carrots, and one dark green vegetable.

Protein powders can be mixed in to give juices a further nutritional boost, along with flax seeds, which are a natural source of protein. Other items can be added to enhance flavor, such as raw or unsweetened coconut and cranberries.

One common complaint among people who juice regu-

larly is the amount of time it takes to prepare the blends. Ms. DeLuz suggests buying a juicer with no more than three removable parts, making it easier to use and clean. Once a juicer is purchased (at least \$60 for a basic model), a variety of quality produce, preferably organic, will need to be purchased. Next comes washing and chopping before blending; cleaning the juicer takes time too.

Someone just starting out can use an ordinary blender, but unless it is being used to

make a smoothie with whole fruit, there is the added step of manually straining out the pulp. Blended juices can also be purchased in the grocery store, but they should be fresh for maximized impact, and can be costly.

Although juice bars are common in Boston and other metropolitan areas, the Island is without one. Ms. DeLuz, well aware of the time commitment involved with juicing, has created vegetable and fruit juices in powdered form to take on the go.

Juicing is not just a trendy thing to do, and it is not only for the rich and famous. Juicing can be relatively affordable, and it is well worth the effort to prepare it. Since juicing improves energy and cognitive abilities, and helps fight disease, why not give it a try? Just remember to heed Ms. Gross's advice, and go light on the sugar.

Caroline Beetz Fenske writes the Edgartown column for The Times.