

[IMAGE]

The Joy of Juicing

By Editorial Staff

When it comes to eating fruits and vegetables, do you cringe? Rather than missing out on the nutrients they provide, give juicing a try and satisfy your palate *and* your nutritional needs.

Whether it's vitamin A to fine-tune your eyesight, calcium for bone strength, vitamin K for proper blood clotting, phosphorus for pH balance or zinc for protein synthesis, vitamins and minerals help your cells and organs function properly.

What happens if you don't get enough vitamins and minerals in your diet? Over time, your risk of developing serious health problems increases dramatically.

Fruits and vegetables are rich sources of micronutrients, and for the most part, they're readily available throughout the year. Yet despite their availability and public-awareness initiatives such as the "5 A Day" campaign (www.5aday.gov) and other similar endeavors, many Americans struggle to consume an adequate amount of fruits and vegetables on a daily basis.

Enter juicing, an increasingly popular option for people who don't have the time, energy and/or palate to get their recommended daily allowance of fruits and vegetables.

If you can't stomach squash, spinach or cucumber whole, then try juicing them with a few apples and a handful of carrots, and drink your daily micronutrients straight from the glass.

juicing - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark By combining juiced fruits and vegetables, you can soften (or even mask completely) the taste of less-enticing vegetables with some of your favorites – and get nutrition you'd be hard pressed (no pun intended) to get otherwise.

Some juicers separate the pulp from the juice, while others juice the entire fruit or vegetable. If pulp isn't your thing, you won't get the fiber present in whole fruits and vegetables, but you can always blend the residual into your favorite soup or casserole, ensuring you get the health benefits of the entire food.

Whether you eat your fruits and vegetables whole or juice them is more a question of preference than nutritional benefit, but one thing is clear: If you can't stand zucchini, won't touch kale and run screaming from beets, juicing them with other fruits and veggies that you do like is an infinitely healthier option than avoiding them altogether. This may be particularly beneficial if you have children, who can be the pickiest eaters of all.

Your doctor can tell you more about the benefits of juicing.

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