

[IMAGE]

Is Juicing Healthy For You?

By Julie T. Chen, MD

Juicing is very quickly becoming one of the hottest topics we address in my clinic of integrative medicine. Because most of my patients are self-motivated in becoming healthier, they are quick to jump on the band wagon of some of the latest health trends. The great thing though is that they are at least willing to ask for some medical advice on the topic before they jump all the way in...and I would highly recommend all readers to do the same with your physicians because that's the safest way to ensure the health and safety of you and your loved ones.

Getting back to the topic of Juicing...should you do it or not?

Well, that depends.

I know, I know, this answer is frustrating...but it really truly does depend on the individual and how they are juicing and whether they have sugar problems and what they are putting in the juice.

There are a few key important points to address when it comes to juicing:

- juicing - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark Juicing should not replace real food. You still need to eat a balanced whole food diet rich in vegetables, legumes, nuts, lean low saturated fat organic proteins, and healthy fats like that found in avocados, nuts and olive oil. You should focus on eating foods high in fiber and nutrients. If you are doing all this and a few times a week you do a mostly vegetable-based juice fast for one or two meals or you do it once every month or few months for a few days as a cleanse, then it's probably fine because on a day to day, you are eating balanced whole foods.
- Juicing may not be a good idea for diabetics or pre-diabetics. If you have sugar issues and you definitely need to check with your doctor about this, you may not want to use juices as your only meal because you will need the balanced fiber and proteins found in whole foods to help balance out your carbohydrate intake. So, for diabetics or pre-diabetics, if you are interested in juicing, please check on how to do this with a registered dietitian first or your endocrinologist so that you don't put your health at risk.
- I am a fan of vegetable juices, not fruit juices. If your juicing recipe is more heavily based on fruits

than vegetables and you have been doing this for a while, you should ask your doctor to check your fasting blood glucose (sugar) and a HbA1C test to see if you've gotten your blood sugar level up by doing this. Fruit juices are too high in sugars and if you've been doing this for a long time, you may have increased your baseline blood sugar and possibly even your triglyceride level. So, please check with your doctor sooner than later and you should switch the juicing over to a mostly or all vegetable juice instead and maintain healthy meals as well.

The pros of juicing is that if you can't regularly get in as many vegetables as you want, then having a green juice or vegetable juice once daily will definitely help you get more nutrients and energy and improve your health. So, while I prefer real whole foods, juicing can be beneficial if you are doing it right with a recipe that is going to help your health instead of hurt it...and to ensure you're doing it right, you should definitely see your doctor about your juicing recipe or a registered dietitian.

Dr. Julie T. Chen is board-certified in internal medicine and fellowship-trained and board-certified in integrative medicine. She has her own medical practice in San Jose, Calif. She is the medical director of corporation wellness at several Silicon Valley-based corporations, is on several medical expert panels of Web sites and nonprofit organizations, is a recurring monthly columnist for several national magazines, and has been featured in radio, newspaper, and magazine interviews. She incorporates various healing modalities into her practice including, but is not limited to, medical acupuncture, Chinese scalp acupuncture, clinical hypnotherapy, strain-counterstrain osteopathic manipulations, and biofeedback. To learn more, visit www.makinghealthyez.com.

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