

The Simple Way to Beat Disease

Make your own juice to increase your consumption of healthy fruits and vegetables.

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Protect Yourself

There are thousands of substances in foods that help protect against heart disease, cancer and other diseases and slow the aging process. Many of these, of course, are found in fruits and vegetables. You know it's important to eat them, but you may have a hard time consuming the four to five cups a day the government recommends (even if you count French fries and potato chips as vegetables!).

But guess what? Fruit and vegetable juices are a convenient and tasty way to help get to that number. In a recent study, the risk for Alzheimer's disease, for example, was substantially reduced among people who drank juice three or more times a week versus those who did so less than once a week. Try these:

- Pomegranate.** In 2005, my colleagues and I at the Preventive Medicine Research Institute in Sausalito, California, found that drinking eight ounces of pomegranate juice a day could begin to reverse the progression of coronary heart disease in only three months. And a UCLA study showed that a daily glass may slow the course of prostate cancer.
- Cranberry.** Studies have shown that cranberry juice may significantly reduce the risk of developing urinary tract infections in sexually active women. Regular consumption may also suppress *H. pylori* infection, which can lead to ulcers and gastric cancer.
- Grape.** You've probably heard that red wine may be good for the heart. You can receive similar benefits from grape juice (look for the Concord variety). Both are loaded with healthy antioxidants.
- Veggie.** Juices made from vegetables usually have less sugar and fewer calories than those from fruit. Tomato juice is high in lycopene, a powerful antioxidant that may reduce the risk of heart disease and prostate and breast cancers. You can mix vegetables together, such as spinach (can help prevent birth defects and heart disease), broccoli (may detoxify cancer-causing substances before they have a chance to cause harm), and carrots (can help protect against heart disease and cancer, and promote good vision).

Where's the Fiber?

Juice is often dismissed because it's low in fiber. Fiber fills you up before you get too many calories. It also slows the rate of absorption of juice into your bloodstream, helping prevent wide swings in your blood sugar. But if you make your own juice, you can mix pulp back in. And some manufacturers are putting fiber into their juice. (Tropicana recently introduced orange juice that has three grams of fiber per eight-ounce glass, about the same as in a medium-sized orange.)

Grapefruit Warning While high in vitamin C, grapefruit juice may interfere with the absorption and metabolism of some statins such as Lipitor, anxiety medications such as Valium, and some antihypertensive drugs. When you drink grapefruit juice with these

drugs, more of the medication enters your bloodstream, the equivalent of taking a higher dose. So check with your doctor.

 Make Your Own
 The most healthful and delicious way to get juices is to make them yourself. Start with fresh produce; organic produce often tastes better. If you don't have a juicer, put cut-up fruit, ice and water (or juice) in a blender, push the start button and voilà!

 Doesn't Juice Make You Fat?
 Not necessarily. Some people have raised the concern that fruit juices may promote weight gain because they may be high in sugar and low in fiber. However, most studies have found that drinking fruit juice, regardless of the type, does not influence weight when consumed in moderation. Both adults and children would be better off drinking 100% juice than drinks that may have only 10% juice or less and significantly greater amounts of sugar or high-fructose corn syrup. An 8-ounce glass of most juice has at least 100 calories, so don't drink more than one a day if you're concerned about your weight.

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