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Treat Yourself to a Juicy, New Cocktail

The trend, it seems, started in California, where men and women dressed in business attire stop off at juice bars for a shot of wheatgrass with a lime chaser or choose a cocktail from an assortment of fruit and vegetable juices over which they relax after a long day's work.

For those not into the singles scene, a home juicer may be your best bet to gain the myriad health benefits from drinking fresh fruit and vegetable juices. You may even be ahead of the trend locally, since the National Cancer Institute recently began a campaign to get people to eat at least five servings of vegetables and three servings of fruit a day to prevent or cure a wide range of ailments.

And why is juicing is gaining popularity? More people today are thinking good health and juicing helps the body absorb more nutrients from fruits and vegetables, aids weakened digestive systems and adds more water to your diet to better hydrate the cells. The body can quickly absorb larger amounts of nutrients from juicing than from eating solid foods because the digestion process is largely bypassed, giving the nutrients a direct path for utilization.

And along with the nutrients, come the beneficial enzymes from raw food. These enzymes convert food into body tissue and energy, as well as support metabolism. Incidentally, juicing can actually speed up your metabolic rate and promote weight loss.

Juicing also ensures that the body is getting sufficient amounts of phytochemicals, which fight disease. Since most people don't eat as many raw fruits and vegetables as their bodies need, juicing offers a way to load up on these powerful nutrients. In addition, antioxidants



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and other immune strengthening properties concentrated in juices can help accelerate recovery from illness.

Anyone feeling the “winter blahs” will likely find that juicing lifts their spirits by providing a concentrated source of minerals like potassium, iron, calcium, folic acid and magnesium. In fact, author Gary Null related a study in *The Joy of Juicing*, which followed 50 health support groups. One group that adopted a juicing and live-food lifestyle over a year's to a year and a half's time, achieved their weight loss goals without dieting or calorie counting.

Also in this group, many long-term chronic illnesses improved or were eradicated, and people's energy levels were dramatically increased. Women in the group regained youthful hormone levels and saw impressive reversals of thinning or graying hair, muscular deterioration, osteoporosis and wrinkles. Many men experienced hormone turnarounds as well, reporting reversal of impotence and depression. Null concluded that, “Juicing is the key to reversing the progress of disease.”

With so many benefits, what stops most of us from adopting a juicing routine? For some, it's a matter of knowing where to start. Null recommends gradually increasing your juice from one 12-ounce glass a day the first month, to two the second, and up to six glasses a day the sixth month. Meanwhile, Joseph Mercola, DO, says we should start with the vegetables we like best, as long as they are pesticide free.

By adding an apple or some lemon or lime to your vegetable juice, one can easily create a tasty mixture of greens to cleanse and detoxify the body or red vegetables like beets to repair the DNA. The ultimate healing ingredients are chlorophyll, phytochemicals, antioxidants and trace elements found in juices.



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Time may be a concern for those with already overburdened schedules. While it does take extra time to juice, it actually takes no longer than it would take to fix a quick breakfast. Purists will insist that the juice be drunk immediately to ensure the enzymes are intact; however, filling a glass jar up to the rim and screwing on an air-tight cap will preserve your juice for a mid-day pick-me-up, without losing too many enzymes. It certainly beats foregoing the juice altogether.

If tempted by the preserved, bottled juice instead, it may be helpful to note that Beech-Nut Nutrition Corporation was indicted on charges of selling millions of bottles of flavored sugar water labeled "100% apple juice," according to Stephen Blauer, author of *The Juicing Book*.

The Florida squeezed juices are made with fruit that has been treated with pesticides, and several countries that export their fruits and vegetables to the U.S. are still using DDT, even though it has been banned by the Environmental Protection Agency. Considering additives like artificial coloring and flavors, corn syrup, sugar, salt and chemical preservatives, go into many bottled juices, they are often no better nutritionally than their soda counterparts.

Researchers at the National Cancer Institute have begun looking for specific substances in fruits and vegetables that offer protection against disease. They have found that a tomato, for example, has 10,000 chemicals in addition to vitamins A and C in it, while fresh carrot juice has more than 20,000 IUs of beta-carotene. The more we learn about their special healing properties, the more likely we are to see fruit and vegetable juice bars springing up like fast-food chains..."*Would you like that Mighty Melon Mash-a-lotta with lime?*"