

Juicing POWER

Juicing may be a great way to get your five-a-day, but is it worth all that extra hassle? **Laila Farran Graves** has the answers

Simply put, juicing is good for you: it can improve your energy levels and, if you throw some 'superfoods' into the mix too, it will also increase your overall sense of wellbeing and boost your immune system. But is it really worth the hassle of all that extra cutting, pressing, separating, and then the dreaded washing up at the end of it? We find out what all the fuss is about and whether it's really worth going the distance...

GETTING YOUR 'FIVE-A-DAY'

One of the reasons juicing is beneficial is that it's a source of your 'five-a-day'. Fresh fruit and

vegetables contribute to a healthy, balanced diet and, according to the NHS, eating five 80g portions of fruit and vegetables a day can help us stay healthy. They are a great source of vitamins and minerals, as well as dietary fibre, which not only help maintain a healthy digestive system, but can also reduce the risk of developing heart disease and stroke.

According to the British Nutrition Foundation (BNF), a number of studies suggest that fruit and vegetables can reduce the risk of certain cancers too (for example, mouth, throat, stomach and lung). There is also a small amount of evidence that eating fruit and vegetables can delay the development of cataracts and help to reduce the risk of diabetes, too.

'Your five-a-day is your bare minimum for good health, and anything below that equals under-functioning,' says Doctor Emma Williams, nutrition scientist at the BNF. She also says that we should subscribe to the 'rainbow' diet if we want to improve our overall health, as recent studies have proved its benefits. It literally involves eating a range of colours in our diet every day.

CHOOSING YOUR JUICE

It's also worth knowing that different fruits and vegetables have different benefits. For example, if you want to increase your energy, try combining carrot, spinach, apple and ginger; if you want to aid your metabolism, choose beetroot, ginger, lemon and pear; or if you want to boost your immune system go for carrot, cucumber, celery and apple. Plus, if you have high blood pressure, drinking a juice made of celery and carrot can help reduce it. Both vegetables are very rich in potassium, which has a positive effect on blood pressure.

'Avoid too much fruit in the juices,' warns nutritionist Emma Jones. 'Try to combine 70 per cent vegetables and 30 per cent fruits. And avoid oranges, as they are highly acidic. When fruit is juiced, blended sugars are released and can damage teeth, especially if consumed frequently, therefore they can contribute to tooth and gum health. The risk is lowered if fruit juice is consumed with a meal.'

SUMMER HEALTH

Summer is an ideal time to get juicing, as we need to stay more hydrated in the heat than during the colder months. The fruits on offer in the summer season are simply divine, ranging from berries and apples, to tropical fruits such as mangos and pineapple. Pineapple contains bromelain, an enzyme that aids troubled digestion, which is often the first symptom of a stressful lifestyle.

'Berries are very good for you, as they are full of antioxidants,' explains nutritional therapist Tara McKearney. 'I have clients who suffer from hayfever and by juicing berries daily their symptoms have stopped completely. They are also low GI so they don't affect your energy levels,' she says.

Pineapple and blackberries are recommended by Tara if you suffer from inflammatory or digestive problems. A good starting juice that's also loved by children (because of its colour) is carrot, beetroot, apple, celery and ginger.

DON'T FORGET...

When it comes to juicing, variety really is the spice of life! So choose a rainbow selection of fruits and vegetables to juice for optimal health benefits, which, as we've seen, really are worth that extra cutting, pressing and separating! ■

JUICING RECIPES

Whizz up a storm with these delicious juices devised by nutritional therapist Tara McKearney. Simply pop the ingredients into a juicer, blend together and enjoy!

SUMMER BOOST

½ pineapple
1 apple
2 handfuls of blueberries
2 handfuls of strawberries
Sparkling water (to taste)

ENERGY KICK

½ lemon
½ grapefruit
1 apple
2 carrots
1-inch square of ginger

EASY JUICE

2 carrots
1 small beetroot (already peeled is ok)
2 whole apples, unpeeled
1 celery stick

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BUYING A JUICER

Juicers fall into four categories: centrifugal, masticating, triturating and manual. We reveal the differences between them and the best ones to buy from UK juicers, visit www.ukjuicers.com or call 01804 787 070 to buy.

◆ **Centrifugal juicers.** These tend to be the cheapest available, but they're a great investment if your juicing requirements aren't too ambitious. They are small and tend to be easy to clean too, as they can generally fit into your dishwasher. They make smooth juices (ideal for children who don't like the 'bits'), but they are generally less powerful than other juicers. The L'Equip XL Juicer, £99, is a great choice.

◆ **Masticating juicers (or single gear).** Like our teeth, these machines work by squeezing the pulp against the mesh and wringing the juice out of the fruit and veg, resulting in a nutrient-rich juice. They often have other features such as making nut butters and sorbets. Try the Champion Juicer, £299.

◆ **Triturating juicers (or twin gear).** Twin gear juicers are the crème de la crème of juicers and, as the name indicates, they have two interlocking gears that grind up your raw ingredients. They are very efficient and can juice anything from wheatgrass to tough leafy greens successfully. They can also be used to create nut butters, pâtés and baby food. Cleaning can be more time-consuming with twin gear juicers though, as they need to be aligned when re-assembling. The Green Power Kempo Exclusive Pro Juicer, £379, is one of the best.

◆ **Manual juicers.** These are easy to use and effective, but the ingredients you can use are limited. They're ideal if you're travelling, though, or only want to juice now and again. They tend to be good if you're on a tight budget, too. Try the Loxen Healthy Juicer, £29.