

Health Juices and Smoothies

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Health juices and smoothies can be made to order in a matter of minutes, making them the ultimate “healthy fast food”. Blueberries, citrus fruits, red/black grapes, kiwi and spinach are examples of foods high in antioxidants and phytochemicals (chemical compounds that occur naturally in plants which are thought to be beneficial to health) which make them an excellent choice for making smoothies.

Benefits

Fruit and vegetable juices:-

- Contain high levels of the minerals potassium and magnesium, both of which are essential in keeping us healthy. Dietary potassium helps maintain the acid-balance in our bodies and is vital to the regulation of blood pressure. Magnesium is important in helping to prevent heart attacks and can be useful in preventing insomnia.
- Contain enzymes that help us digest food but which are destroyed by heat during cooking.
- Contain nutrients that can help us fight disease and bolster the immune system.
- Help speed the metabolism.
- Provide an instant lift followed by a sustained energy release. This is far more beneficial to the body than the “shock” of a sugar-rush from chocolate or a caffeine-hit from coffee which rapidly depletes energy levels after the initial high.
- Are rapidly absorbed and start to work immediately, making them especially useful for the elderly and children.

Getting Started

If you have a good quality blender then all you need to get started is a base of yoghurt or rice milk to which you can add frozen or fresh fruits (e.g. Blueberries). Juicing fruit and vegetables is also a good way to get nutrients into your body especially if you have any swallowing problems. If you start with juicing a carrot or apple, you can add virtually any other vegetable or fruit and it will taste good. For example, you could include a handful of washed spinach leaves for added vitality and you will not even realise it is there (making this an excellent way to increase the amount of green vegetables in your diet). Alternatively, a handful of muesli or some nuts can be added and blended to make it more of a fast meal / breakfast.

You can make your own blends of smoothies and vegetable juices to suit your own tastes. The internet is a good source of information for tried and tested recipes and most juicers will come with a book of recipes supplied. The more adventurous recipes will incorporate vegetables as well as fruits and it’s recommended that you investigate some of these.

Please note that health juices / smoothies are best consumed within 10 minutes of preparation as the enzymes are lost if the juices are stored for longer.