

Down with Juice

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Think you're doing your body a favor by juicing? Think again...

The most impressive food trend that can be owed entirely to marketing of the last five years is undoubtedly juicing. Juicing involves liquefying fresh fruit and vegetables, either by extracting the juice or including the whole fruit/vegetable [without the peel] to make the juice thick. Either way you squeeze it, juicing is a HUGE ploy as far as any “detox” or “cleansing” effects; it’s not nutritious, and it’s downright dangerous for you and your family. Here’s why:

1. Blood sugar rollercoaster = not as fun as Dueling Dragons at Universal Studios. When you drink a concentrated source of sugar, like juice, your blood sugar skyrockets, your pancreas releases insulin to save the day, and then you will crash. You’ll feel like juice pulp afterward (people often end up fainting from dramatic drops in blood sugar), you won’t be full because our bodies don’t register liquid calories as well as solid calories, and over time you can become sensitive to your own insulin which causes diabetes and other issues with metabolism/makes it very hard to lose weight.

2. It’s expensive. A SINGLE juice can range from about eight to almost 20 dollars. An entire “cleanse?” *Hundreds of dollars.* You could buy so much bountiful fresh or frozen organic whole produce with that. Or buy Madeleine (the official Essence Nutrition dog) a new outfit. Or buy me a new outfit.



3. It’s treacherous for your teeth. I’ve spoken to some dentists. They’re positively thrilled with the juicing trend. A pure sugar waterfall wash on teeth = breeding ground for *Streptococcus Mutans*, the bacteria that cause cavities = more business.

4. After a day, or two, or three, of only drinking juice you’re depriving your body of vital proteins it cannot produce itself to support your everyday metabolic functions. You know what goes first when we don’t eat protein? Muscle mass. You know what goes last? Fat. You may feel light as a feather, but that’s mostly a sugar high, a result of being sufficiently hydrated, and you’ll be starving when you do finally return to the land of the living and reintroduce solid, nutritious foods. And guess what? Rebound weight, which will likely return as FAT mass.

5. Many methods of juicing do not preserve the fiber of the fruit. Fiber is the part that slows down blood sugar spikes and crashes, keeps your tummy happy, binds cholesterol in your body, and leaves you full and satisfied after meals. Why would you sacrifice fiber?

6. Fact check: there’s no such thing as “detoxing” or “cleansing,” especially related to juice. You have a liver and you have kidneys that do a fabulous job of metabolizing and removing potentially harmful metabolic byproducts and chemicals from your body. Nothing you ingest is going to cleanse you. Take a shower. Drink some water. Happy kidneys will result.

Sure, an occasional smoothie (with some healthy fat and protein; try vegan protein powders, organic nut butters, seeds, nuts, oats, almond milks, etc.) can be a refreshing and healthy snack or meal option. But leave the juiciness to fiction novels, not your drinks.

You know where juice belongs? *Not even* in sippy cups. That’s right. There’s *no* reason healthy toddlers/children should be drinking juice (unless they’re on a medically mandated clear liquid diet, or post-surgery, etc.). In fact, I used to campaign for the pediatric hospital where I worked to become a “juice-free” facility. Go outside, pluck an orange from our native Miami fertile trees, and have your kids EAT it.

A Pinecrest native, Monica Heather Auslander attended UF for undergrad FIU for her Master’s in Dietetics and Nutrition with published and presented research nationally. Monica previously worked as a pediatric dietitian at Jackson Memorial Hospital. She launched her private nutrition practice, Essence Nutrition, as a luxury concierge nutrition company in Coral Gables, for individuals and businesses. She has presented on nutrition for various corporations and groups and serves as the in-house dietitian for Cold Pressed Raw Kitchen and the House of Movement. She is also a visiting professor at the University of Miami graduate studies in Nutrition program.