

Q. Is there anything wrong with a juice cleanse diet?

A. If you want to add more fruits and vegetables to your diet, juicing can be a good way to achieve this. But going on a juice cleanse, fast, or detox diet, to lose weight may do more harm than good.

In a typical juicing recipe, fresh fruits and vegetables are put through a high-powered juicing machine. This removes the fiber and pulp from the fruits and vegetables. And out comes a nutrient-rich, and often green-colored juice (depending on the fruits and vegetables you use). Stripping out the pulp and fiber makes it easy to gulp down a glass of juice made directly from fruits and vegetables. But it also creates some other problems.

High Blood Sugar

Without the pulp and fiber, juice made from fruits and vegetables has a high Glycemic Index. This means your body rapidly converts the carbohydrates from the juice into glucose. A spike in blood sugar levels can increase hunger, irritability, fatigue, and the risk for diabetes. In a study published in the *British Medical Journal*, researchers found that drinking fruit and vegetable juice regularly, compared to eating fruits and vegetables, increased the risk for developing diabetes.

Digestive Discomfort

Let's say you set up your juicer and feed it a cucumber, an apple, two



celery stalks, two carrots, and three beats. This concoction contains about 40 grams of dietary sugar, almost the same amount as a 12-ounce soda. But this dietary sugar, called *sorbitol*, isn't easily digested. Gulp down the drink, and what follows is a bout of intestinal gas, bloating, and discomfort. That's a lot less likely to happen if you eat fruits and vegetables instead of juicing.

Harmful Bacteria

In a study published in the *Food Control Journal*, researchers checked freshly squeezed juice for bacteria. They found unhealthy levels of bacteria in 43 percent of the samples. Without thoroughly washing fruits and vegetables, your juice could be contaminated. Freshly-squeezed juice can also develop harmful bacteria in a short amount of time, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

If this happens, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, headache, and other symptoms of food poisoning may occur.

Weight Gain

Most people who consider juicing do so as a way to lose weight. And if you follow a low-calorie diet and only drink juice from fruits and vegetables, you will lose weight initially. However, this approach to dieting will slow your metabolism. Instead of losing fat, your body will use lean muscle tissue for energy. And most people who lose weight this way end up gaining the weight back, according to a study in the *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*.

Juicing fruits and vegetables may seem like an easy way to improve your diet and lose weight. But it can backfire in a big way. Aim to **eat** at least 2 to 3 cups each of fruits and vegetables a day. If that's hard for you to do, get the extra servings you need from juice. And when it comes to weight loss, there's no substitute for eating a healthy diet and getting regular exercise.

Sources:

British Medical Journal.

Food Control Journal.

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