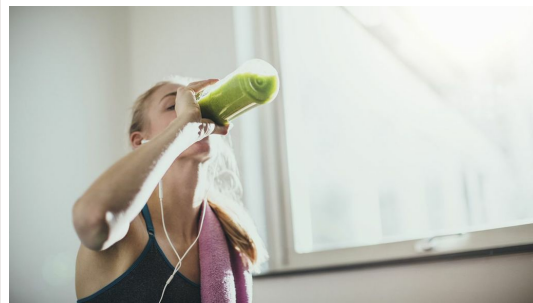


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Why green juice isn't all it's cracked up to be

By Stuart Marsh · a day ago



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The bikinis are being dusted off, the local gyms are full to burst and the morning cup of coffee has been replaced by the ubiquitous green juice: Yep, summer is well and truly underway.

But is green juice – which people claim does everything from removing toxins to shedding tens of kilos – actually as healthy as we think?

The answer is subtle: *it can be*, but it certainly won't remedy your health and shrink your waistline as the wellness bloggers might have you believe.

"We all have that idea that 'if it is green, it is good for me', and while the general idea is right, there are some things that need to be avoided," Ricardo Riskalla, owner of [RawFit](#) and head trainer at IMG models, tells [Coach](#).

"I would avoid juices that contain fruit. Juices must be 100 percent made with vegetables. The only fruit that I would recommend in juices would be lemon."

According to accredited practising dietitian [Melanie McGrice](#), the ingredient list of a typical green juice makes it sound like there's zero nutritional skeletons in the closet – but that's before you run them through an industrial juicer.

"Green vegetables, apples, lemons and ginger are certainly all nutritious ingredients, and although a green smoothie is certainly a nutritious option, an even better option is to eat these ingredients whole rather than juicing them," McGrice tells [Coach](#).

"For example, consuming three apples in the space of five minutes is really more sugars than most of us need in one hit. If you were eating them, it's unlikely that you'd get through so many at once."

Counting the calories

Let's face it – almost *nobody* drinks green juices in the middle of winter when the chances of stripping off the layers in front of a crowd are scarce.

Most people drink them as a way of losing weight, or as a way of "detoxifying" their body after a particularly heinous weekend of binge drinking and partying.

According to McGrice, relying on that green juice to fill you up for the rest of the day is playing a fool's game, because an extra-large green juice could contain a shocking amount of calories.

"According to the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating, a 'serve' of juice is only 150ml because of the concentrated kilojoules," explains McGrice.

"When you juice, you also miss the physiological benefits of chewing which sends messages to the brain that you've had enough to eat."

Let's do the maths: say you order a large green juice with all the usual suspects [recommended in recipes](#) – a couple of apples, some celery, kale, cucumber, lemon and a little bit of ginger.

When totalled together, you're potentially sipping on a juice totalling more than 400 calories and containing more than 80 grams of sugar.

For Riskalla, it's the sugar that attracts people to the juice, but it's also what makes them more likely to put a dent in your weight loss efforts.

"I would recommend avoiding green juices that contain high sugar vegetables like carrot and beetroot," suggests Riskalla.

"Juice bars love them because they have a high water content, are cheap, are make everything more sweet – and that translates into more sales."

The trouble with green juices is that many people (including myself) are likely to drink the juice on top of three square meals a day, putting them 400 calories over their regular daily consumption and leaving them wondering why they're not losing any weight.

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Exploding the detox myth

Here at [Coach](#) we've [debunked the myth](#) that people should go on detoxes to remove toxins from their body at length – in all, drinking nothing but juice to cleanse yourself was found to give you nothing more than an intense calorie deficit and a potential protein deficiency.

But what about if you're not doing a total-juice cleanse and you're just adding in a juice every couple of days to help your liver and kidneys do their job? Surely that would help the body recover from a huge night out?

"No," answers McGrice simply. "Our liver and kidneys detoxify our body."

"However, the antioxidants found in fruits and vegetables can help destroy free radicals in our body. Drinking a green smoothie won't undo the damage of an alcohol binge any faster than a glass of water would."

Don't ditch the green juice altogether, but understand what it actually is

According to both experts, the criticism against green juice sounds harsh, but only because so many people have made it to be some kind of health manna from heaven.

Online blogs can be found claiming that green juice does everything from [removing heavy metals from your body](#), to [alkalising your blood](#), to [giving you 'a level of consciousness that Buddha, Jesus and every living saint has achieved'](#).

In reality, sipping on a juice full of fresh produce may be the difference between you eating vegetables and fruit at all – and that can only be a good thing.

"Drinking a green smoothie can certainly be a way to help you meet your two servings of fruit and five servings of veg, but ensure that you're not adding more than two serves of fruit," suggests McGrice.

"Juicing is a great way to provide a lot of nutrition and kilojoules in one hit. As dietitians, we often recommend juicing to the elderly who have small appetites."

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