

EAT FRUIT: Load up on the Fibre

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It is a fallacy to think that fruit juice is any healthier than soft drinks. In fact, a greater intake of fruit juices is associated with a higher risk of type 2 diabetes. Although fruit juices may have antioxidant activity, they lack fibre, are less satiating and have a higher sugar content. The danger lies in regular consumption of fruit juice which recently has been linked with an increase in type 2 diabetes risk.

However, people who eat a minimum of three servings of fruit are likely to have a reduced risk of type 2 diabetes, some types of cancers, hypertension and heart diseases when compared to those who do not take fruit every day. Even if you have diabetes, you should still eat two servings of fruit every day. Although fruits contain sugar, they are low in calories. Even berries, peaches and apricots are low in glycaemic loads even when they are fully ripe.

Now the other all too important question is which of the two, juice extraction or eating whole fruits, is more beneficial.

Juicing fruit seems like an easy way to squeeze more nutrients into your busy schedule but, watch out, they are loaded with natural sugars as well! A 250ml glass of unsweetened orange juice contains around 100 calories, compared to an orange that contains only 60 calories.

Fresh juice may be abundant in vitamins, minerals, phytonutrients, and antioxidants. Unfortunately, they lack fibre! Fruit juice that has been robbed of its fibre is merely a concentrated source of sugar. Higher amounts of sugar in the juice can also quickly cause a rise in blood sugar levels. If you are not careful, these extra calories can lead to unhealthy weight gain.

Eat the Fruit, Not Drink It

The glycaemic index (a measure of how rapidly carbohydrates in a food elevates blood sugar) of fruit is not significantly associated with type 2 diabetes risk when compared to the high glycaemic index of fruit juice. This is because fruit juice rolls through the



digestive system much faster than fibre-loaded whole fruit.

You can always blunt the blood sugar-raising effects by taking advantage of the fibre in fruit and vegetables. Fibre is the indigestible part of plant foods that, because the body does not break it down, has zero calories and therefore does not affect your blood sugar, making it pretty good for people with diabetes.

The main benefit of eating whole fruit is that the nutrients are intact and you get both the soluble and insoluble types of fibres. Soluble fibre can help lower your cholesterol levels and improve blood glucose control if eaten in large amounts. Apples, oranges, and pears all contain soluble fibre, but not when juiced.

Both soluble and insoluble fibres, along with other nutrients, have a synergistic action in reducing blood pressure, improving insulin sensitivity, keeping you full for longer periods so that it can naturally decrease the risk of obesity and heart diseases.

By grabbing a whole fruit you are less likely to experience a spike in your blood sugar, too. The fibre makes your body absorb the natural sugars more slowly. Combining fibre-rich fruits with protein and fats will also slow down the absorption of the carbohydrates that curtail the overall effect of the meal on your blood sugar levels.

So, instead of juicing, eat the whole fruit to get the best out of Nature's goodness.