

9 Tips to Keep That Green Juice Detox Safe

By: Moniqua Plante



It seems no matter where you look, you see claims that a green juice detox is either the healthiest thing you could possibly do for your body or the most destructive diet you'll ever undertake. It's a polarizing concept, and it truly doesn't need to be.

The truth is that juicing, like so many of the things that we do for our health, is perfectly good for us — in moderation. Juicing too much or juicing the wrong way can be detrimental to your health.

Worried that you're not juicing correctly? Never fear — we've got 9 tips to make sure your juicing habits stay well within the realm of healthy, helpful, and delicious.

1. Be Wary of Over-Detoxing

Choosing green juice as a detox tool is a good idea, in principle — after all, it's the chlorophyll in green plants that does the work of detoxing. "Chlorophyll is a chelating agent," explains naturopathic doctor and inventor of The Rockstar Remedy, Dr. Gabrielle Francis. "This means it binds to toxins, heavy metals, and pesticides and pulls them out of our cells and into the blood."

That said, detoxing can go too far. When chlorophyll pulls toxins out of cells, the gut and liver can go into overdrive and make you feel sick. Dr. Francis addresses this by including a gut repair powder as well as protein, which builds liver enzymes, in her green juice drink. You can also boost your liver by drinking lots of water and avoiding all manner of processed and artificial foods.

2. How You Drink Is as Important as What You Drink

The detoxing power of chlorophyll doesn't discriminate – it pulls toxins from anything around it, including plastic. If you drink green juice out of a plastic container, Dr. Francis warns, it will pull the plastic into the juice. And we all know what that means: all of those nasty chemicals in the plastic are floating around in what should be a healthy beverage.

In other words, when it comes to green juice, stick to glass.

3. Balance is Key with a Green Juice Detox

It's easy to get stuck in a rut, particularly when you find a green juice recipe you particularly like. But balance in your green juicing regimen is key to making sure you're helping and not hurting your body.



Juicing image via Shutterstock

For example, Dr. Francis highlights the trend of including lots of cruciferous vegetables like kale and collard greens in juices. These vegetables are great for you, with tons of vitamin K and vitamin A. However, these vegetables, along with spinach, mustard greens, millet, turnips, strawberries, and peaches, also contain goitrogens, which inhibit the body's absorption of iodine, particularly in their raw state, and have been linked to thyroid problems. For this reason, Dr. Francis recommends limiting them to 3-5 servings a week.

Lori Kenyon Farley, a Certified Nutrition Consultant, specializing in wellness, fitness and anti-aging and founder of Project Juice, does note that, "If you have healthy thyroid function, consuming these items will not cause you to develop any thyroid issues."

That being said, balance is always a good idea. "I think that it is always best to diversify greens and veggies in the juices so as to get a larger variety of nutrients," Dr. Francis says.

Farley suggests including other fruits and vegetables, including beets, apples, cucumber, celery, romaine, Swiss chard, apples, lemon, ginger, oranges, grapefruit, and lime, all of which can be juiced safely, with no adverse effects on the thyroid.

Dr. Francis also suggests trying to include seaweed in some green juices, the iodine content of which can counteract the goitrogens and increase thyroid function.

Brad Davidson, author of "The Stark Naked 21-Day Metabolic Reset," fitness expert and nutritionist, also suggests alternating green juice with cranberry juice. "It is rich in phytonutrients (anthocyanins, catechins, luteins, and quercetin), which help to keep your liver detoxification pathways open, so they aren't jammed up by environmental pollutants, trans-fats, sugars, and other toxins," he says. "In other words, cranberry juice helps 'take out the trash.'"

4. Raw Isn't the Only Way

If you just can't get enough kale, there is another way to give your thyroid a break. Goitrogens are only present in raw cruciferous vegetables, so one option is to lightly steam cruciferous vegetables before adding them to your juice or smoothie, according to Davidson.

Do be aware that steaming suppresses enzyme activity, so it's still always a good idea to get variety in your juices and not rely entirely on crucifers, even steamed, to get all of the vitamins, minerals, and enzymes you need.

5. Beware of Sugar

Particularly when you're just beginning to juice, you might need to add a good amount of fruit to your juice to make the drink palatable. But be wary of adding too much fruit, to keep the sugar content and calorie content of your juices low.

This is particularly true for those with blood sugar issues. "Juices contain no fiber, causing your body to absorb them much more quickly than the produce they were made from," explains Farley. "If you suffer from low blood sugar or high blood sugar, check with your doctor to confirm juicing is okay for you."



Green juice image via Shutterstock

6. Don't Forget Fiber in a Green Juice Detox

Fiber isn't just important for blood sugar concerns. Fiber is an integral part of your diet, and since juice contains none, you will need to be careful of doing any green juice detoxes for too long. "Fiber improves the quality and regularity of bowel movements, removes toxins from the body, stabilizes blood sugar, and lowers cholesterol," says Davidson.

Farley suggests including a good amount of fiber-rich foods when you're not cleansing, and to pay special attention to the fiber content in your diet if you are replacing some meals with juices.

To include more fiber in your diet, you could also consider a smoothie instead. "Blending is preferable over juicing, because the fiber is not removed from the fruits and vegetables when you blend," explains Davidson. Swapping out some of your juices for smoothies could solve the fiber problem.

7. Opt for an Organic Green Juice Detox

It should go without saying, but when juicing, be sure to opt for organic. Juicing fruits and vegetables brings out their essential contents: vitamins, minerals, enzymes... and pesticides. Be sure to pick organic fruits and vegetables and to wash them very well before juicing to make sure that you're only getting the good stuff.

8. Green Juices Don't Have to Be Made with Fresh Fruits and Veggies

While the ideal green juice detox comes entirely from fresh fruits and veggies, this isn't your only option, particularly if you're starting to find all that organic produce expensive.



Green juice powder image via Shutterstock

Dr. Francis suggests green powders as an alternative, as they are less expensive than fresh vegetables. "Green powders are about \$1 per day vs. \$10 per day for the green juice," she says.

9. Trust Your Gut

As with any diet, cleanse, detox, or food, if you don't feel well, stop! "A detox should only be done if it will improve one's health, not worsen it," says Davidson.

Of course, some changes are to be expected when beginning a green juice detox, such as gastrointestinal and digestive differences and flu symptoms. Be sure to discuss any issues with your GP or a naturopathic doctor.

Do you have any other suggestions and tips to share from your own experience with a green juice detox? Share them with us on Facebook or via Twitter @organicauthorit.