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The Dirt On Juice

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By **Sheila Buff**

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Many of us think that drinking a tall glass of freshly pressed green juice is about the same as eating two whole pounds of fresh vegetables. You get all the nutrition of the veggies—the vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, phytonutrients, and even protein—quickly, and without all the chewing. Your drink goes down so easily because juicing removes the insoluble fiber, the indigestible stringy stuff that gives veggies their crunch. But is that missing fiber a problem?

It might be. “One of the benefits of juiced vegetables is their quick and efficient absorption into your system,” says nutrition coach **Holli Thompson**, author of *Discover Your Nutritional Style*. “But without fiber to slow down absorption, the juice, especially if it has fruit added to it, can spike your blood sugar. People with blood sugar problems or diabetes may find that the benefit of quick absorption can turn into a problem.”

What’s the fix? Easy, according to Thompson. “Have a green smoothie instead. It’s just your favorite vegetables, maybe with a bit of added fruit, combined with a liquid, such as coconut water. In a high-speed blender it takes a lot less time than making juice and you drink down the fiber. There’s another plus: if your digestive system is on the delicate side, smoothies may be easier on it than juice.”

Green juice may not have the insoluble fiber of veggies, but as **Amy Waldman**, founder and director of Purée Artisan Juice Bar in Bethesda, Maryland and Washington D.C., points out, “All the *soluble* fiber is still there in cold-pressed juice. That’s the fiber that’s most important for lowering cholesterol and helping keep blood sugar under control. If you want some insoluble fiber in your green drink, ask the barista to add some chia or flax seeds. They taste great and go down very smoothly.”

And do you really need to be getting fiber from your juice? “The lack of fiber isn’t really an issue if you’re having green juice along with a plate of good food with plenty of veggies,” says **Amanda Chantal Bacon**, owner of Moon Juice in Los Angeles, where stars like **Rooney Mara**, **Shailene Woodley**, **Anna Paquin**, and **Demi Moore** are regulars. “Of course, if you’re doing a juice cleanse, then the lack of fiber is the point. You want to give your digestive system a rest and let your body get into natural detox mode. You don’t really need fiber for those few days.”

To keep blood sugar from spiking, Bacon recommends avoiding juices sweetened with a lot of fruit. “A small amount of fruit to sweeten a green drink is fine. If you want something sweeter, eat the whole fruit or blend it into a smoothie. You keep the fiber and avoid the spike.”

SOURCES:

Holli Thompson: [hollithompson.com \(http://hollithompson.com/\)](http://hollithompson.com/)

Puree Artisan Juice Bar: [pureejuicebar.com \(http://pureejuicebar.com/\)](http://pureejuicebar.com/)

Moon Juice: [moonjuiceshop.com \(http://moonjuiceshop.com/\)](http://moonjuiceshop.com/)

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