

# Juicing leaves you high and dry?

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I first heard of juice cleanses several years ago when a Hollywood celebrity lost a significant amount of weight from it and was a hot topic in the women's locker room for a while. Fast forward to 2014, juice cleanses have gained more and more momentum and I am seeing it everywhere from social media postings to hearing stories from people who gave it a try and others who swear by it. I'm a skeptic of all things that promise fast results and miracle cures so naturally I feel the need to do my own research and let science and facts do the talking.

First off, what is a juice cleanse? According to the Huffington Post, a juice cleanse is when a person limits their diet to only fresh vegetable and fruit juices and water for anywhere from a few days to several weeks. The juices need to be freshly squeezed and unpasteurized, which means you can't just stop by the grocery store to pick up several juices from the refrigerated section and call it juicing.

Why do people go on juice cleanses? According to [livestrong.com](http://livestrong.com), proponents of juice cleanses claim that by avoiding solid foods and drinking particular "detoxifying" vegetable and fruit juices help our digestive system eliminate toxins, with the end result being overall enhanced health and wellness. Some even claim that juice cleanses can increase your energy, boost your immune system, strengthen your bones, make your skin glow and cure certain disease and illnesses. Let's not forget the weight loss that often results from juice cleanses. No wonder people are flocking to juice bars and stores like fruit flies!

Does all this sound too good to be true? Perhaps it just is. Here're some facts about juice cleanses:

## **1. It's not safe for diabetics, people with kidney diseases and cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy**

According to the Huffington Post, and [WomensHealthMag.com](http://WomensHealthMag.com), the high sugar

consumption in most juice cleanses along with the lack of fiber, protein and fats to slow down digestion, can skyrocket blood-sugar levels, which is especially dangerous for diabetics.

The high concentration of potassium and other minerals from excessive juice consumption can also build up in the blood to hazardous levels for people with kidney diseases.

The high levels of antioxidants and low levels of protein can also be dangerous for those undergoing chemo.

## **2. Juice fasts can contribute to nutrient deficiency especially when done repeatedly or on a regular basis**

According to the Huffington Post, juice fasts do not provide our bodies with enough protein and fat. Without enough protein, your body cannot build new tissue or repair tissues broken down from working out. Also, fat-soluble vitamins such as vitamins A, D, E and K may not be effectively absorbed due to the lack of fat in a juice fast. Our skin tone, hair, and bone density may suffer as a result of prolonged or repeated juice fasts.

## **3. Juice fasts will not contribute to significant or sustainable weight loss and certainly not fat loss**

Like most weight loss diets, juice fasts drastically reduce your daily calorie consumption. [Womenshealthmag.com](http://Womenshealthmag.com) suggested that most juice cleanses only provide 1,000 or fewer calories per day. Your body is likely to go into starvation mode and any weight loss is pretty much from water and muscle loss. As your body gets dehydrated and when you lose muscle, your metabolism actually slows down so over time you will gain the weight back and may even end up worse off than when you started. So think carefully before you decide on taking this short cut before your next beach vacation or class reunion.

## **4. Some not so pleasant side effects of juice fasts**

With the high sugar intake of juices, your body secretes a large amount of insulin which leads to a sugar crash shortly after. This leaves your body feeling weak and tired. Also, according to both the Huffington Post and Womenshealthmag.com, without enough proteins, your body maybe lacking the amino acids that neurotransmitters need to maintain your mood or keep you focused, you may find yourself unfocused, irritable or even depressed after 2 or 3 days on the juice fast. To make matters worse, the high carbohydrate intake from juice fasts causes a surplus of water to enter your digestive system, so no wonder you have to keep yourself close to a bathroom from the diarrhea you are likely to experience. Of course, the faithful juice cleanse proponents will probably tell you that's because the detox is working!

### **5. Your body already has a built-in detox mechanism and no outside help is needed**

We often hear the phrase "Listen to your body!" and I can't agree anymore. Our bodies are designed to help us get rid of unwanted materials, whether it's excess alcohol, fat, proteins or other harmful chemicals. When we breathe, sweat, urinate and have normal bowel movements, we are getting rid of toxins. Our liver, kidneys and intestines work like a well-trained orchestra to make it happen and no outside help is needed. We don't need to try to outsmart our perfectly capable bodies.

### **6. Juice cleanses maybe developing into a new form of eating disorder**

The growing population of people using juice cleanses to lose weight have some experts worried that juice cleanses are breeding a new form of eating disorder. In an article in Marie Claire magazine, they've termed some of these cleanse devotees as "juicerexics." Juicerexics may spend a weekend indulging on foods and drinks followed by a cleanse the next few days and repeat the cycle over and over to stay thin. The costs of this never-ending pursuit of thinness can be osteoporosis and sarcopenia. Is fitting in a certain size worth future frailty and bone fractures?

### **7. Juice cleanses can put a dent into your wallet**

The weight loss industry has and probably always will be a booming business. Unless you make all

the juices at home, most juice cleanse stores will charge you \$65 to \$70 a day, which adds up to over \$300 a week. That's a lot of groceries and will buy you a fancy dinner with your hot date.

### **What is a better way to detox then?**

Perhaps you've tried a juice cleanse and felt so much better after so you're a believer. What if you were simply to limit your alcohol, caffeine, sugar, saturated fats and processed food intake for a week, I am willing to bet a pretty penny that you are going to feel just as great without the unpleasant side effects from a juice fast.

According to the Mayo Clinic, the best diet is one that's based on a variety of fruits and vegetables, whole grains and lean sources of protein. So instead of depriving yourself from solid foods, the pleasure of chewing and the bonding time you can have with your friends and family over the dinner table, make your meals with local, seasonal, and organic ingredients and get your meats from humane sources. Let's practice nutritious, responsible and sustainable eating and leave the short-term fixes to Hollywood celebrities.

### **References**

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