

## Chapter 1

# Drinking Your Way to Better Health

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### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Getting acquainted with the liquid lifestyle
  - ▶ Looking at what juices and smoothies offer
  - ▶ Juicing for the joy of it
  - ▶ Savoring smoothies
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**W**elcome to a healthier life through juicing and smoothies! With this book, you can regain your natural energy or life force by eating and *especially* by drinking to be well. Energy is the basic force throughout all of nature that drives life. It starts at the cellular level. To nourish the cells and live life at optimum health, we need four essential components: sleep, air, water, and nutrients.

You can get those nutrients from a variety of sources, but you get the most bang for your buck with whole, organic foods. Whole foods are unprocessed and unrefined, not chemically treated, and they're in as pure a state as possible when we eat them. Whole foods are fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, legumes, lentils, nuts, seeds, herbs, unprocessed meat, and dairy products. Whole foods offer a wide variety of nutrients including phytonutrients; not only are they a source of soluble and insoluble fiber but they're also relatively low in fat.

Juices and smoothies offer immediate results and a gigantic step along the path towards health and wellness. If you own a blender, you can start today and with very little money, time, or effort, you'll have more energy, improved digestion and elimination, a stronger immune system, a better memory, and healthy skin and nails — and you'll likely lose some weight, too.

When you start drinking your way to better health, you'll feel positively charged and fully able to take whatever life has to offer.

## The Liquid Lifestyle

Let me explain what I mean by the term *liquid lifestyle*. First, I use the word *liquid* to describe juices and smoothies. I like to think of juices and smoothies as drinkable whole foods. They're liquid and, therefore, drinkable because:

- ✔ A juice machine has pressed or spun the water along with the nutrients out of them.
- ✔ The powerful blades of a blender have broken down the carbohydrate and fiber so much that they're liquidized and easily swallowed.

The word *lifestyle* indicates that drinking juices and smoothies is something that becomes a part of your life because it's incorporated into a daily routine. So, the liquid lifestyle is a convenient way to incorporate organic, whole fruits and vegetables into your daily life in order to feel great and stay healthy.

The liquid lifestyle starts with healthy habits. You don't need a miracle pill or expensive supplements to enjoy good health, and you don't need to radically overhaul your life or your diet. When you opt for a liquid lifestyle, you're choosing to add one new healthy habit. That's it — simple and convenient. It's not daunting or mystifyingly complicated. Instead, it's easy and fun, with rewards that you may not expect. And if you keep at it by following some of the tips in this book, it's a habit that will lead to other healthy food decisions without making you feel like you're giving something up.

By making this one healthy decision to drink juices or smoothies when your energy starts to wane or when you feel thirsty or hungry, you're doing more than just one positive thing for yourself. Here are just some of the magical things that result from choosing a liquid lifestyle:

- ✔ You're eliminating high-fat and high-calorie foods that only add calories with no nutrients.
- ✔ You're resetting your taste sensors to eliminate your craving for salty or sugar-filled junk food.
- ✔ You're adding valuable fiber to help your body eliminate toxins and keep you regular.
- ✔ You're flooding your cells with high-quality nutrients that repair cells and protect against diseases.

In fact, when you're enjoying a liquid lifestyle, you're doing so much more than simply feeding a thirst or hunger. A liquid lifestyle can change the way you think about yourself. It can pave the way for a shift in your diet almost automatically, without making you feel deprived. After all, who wants to follow a refreshing fruit or vegetable juice with french fries?

Life in the 21st century is exciting, fast paced, and, at times, stressful. It's a double whammy that as life gets faster, so does our food. So, most people are grabbing refined and processed foods with less fiber and nutrients when their hectic jobs and busy schedules are actually pushing their bodies to require more and more quality foods just to keep them functioning.

I know from experience that from the very first glass of raw, fresh vegetable juice, you'll feel the immediate response from your body. Keep up the liquid lifestyle, and you'll be drinking yourself to better health.



The one key benefit of juices and smoothies is that they boost your intake of fresh fruits and vegetables, two of the most important whole foods.

## *Healthy Living in a Glass*

Opting to make your own smoothies and juices means that you're making a fresh start. Commercial juices and smoothies, whether purchased at your grocery store or at a juice bar, are still better for you than junk food and soft drinks, but making your own allows you to be in total control of what goes into the drink. You can save money and still buy organic, fresh fruits and vegetables that are at their peak of ripeness and, thus, bursting with optimum nutrients.

Reaching for a glass of homemade juice or a smoothie means that you can stop taking commercial supplements. You'll save money and get more of your daily nutrient requirements by drinking two or more pure fruit or vegetable drinks. The advantage of eating or drinking whole fruits and vegetables is that they contain so many complementary nutrients and trace elements, not just the major ones such as calcium or vitamin C or A. These complementary nutrients help the body metabolize or use the vitamins or minerals that we assume we'll be getting from a particular food or a commercial supplement, and they help to boost their effectiveness.

Commercial supplements that have isolated one or two nutrients lack all the other substances that occur naturally in foods and allow the body to fully use them. For example, if you were taking a multivitamin with 10 mg of iron and it didn't have enough vitamin C and calcium to assist the body in taking up and using that iron, the iron would pass through your body virtually unused.



My advice for complete and optimum healthy living in a glass is to drink the rainbow twice a day. Try to include as wide a variety as possible of the vibrant and colorful fruits and vegetables available to you. This approach ensures that you're getting the best and the most nutrients that nature offers. And if you drink two or more glasses of juice or smoothies every day, you'll be providing your body with a continuous replenishment of nutrients that are lost in

normal daily living. Think of your body as a bank: If you deposit only lower value coins (or empty calories), you won't have the cash (or energy) to do the things you want. Worse still, eventually, you won't have the reserves to defend yourself against a tough economy (bacteria and deadly diseases).

Eating well and adding two or more fresh juices or smoothies to your daily routine will top up your nutrient reserves all day long so that you'll actually notice a change in your physical well-being. Take a peek at what you can expect from healthy living in a glass:

- ✓ **Glowing skin:** Collagen is made up of proteins that forms the “glue” used by the body to connect and support tissues such as skin, bone, tendons, muscles, organs, teeth, gums, and cartilage. Vitamin C is essential in building collagen. Fruits and vegetables high in vitamin C — citrus fruit, strawberries, cabbage, peppers — are essential for healthy skin. Vitamin A, found in apricots, carrots, spinach, and squash, protects the skin from sun damage. Skin cells are protected from aging by Vitamin E, found in dark green leafy vegetables, wheat germ, and nuts and seeds.
- ✓ **Bright eyes:** Beta carotene, as found in the carotenoids of fruits and vegetables, is converted to *retinol* by the body. Retinol protects the surface of the eye, or the *cornea*, and is essential for good vision. Vitamin A is so important to your eyes that a deficiency (rare in developed countries) results in blindness.
- ✓ **Buff bones:** In the United States, 40 million or more people have osteoporosis or are at high risk for low bone mass, according to the National Institutes of Health. Among several other things, a diet low in calcium and vitamin D will make you more prone to bone loss. This is something you can totally control by including calcium-rich foods in smoothies and getting lots of fresh air and sunlight for vitamin D. Dark green leafy vegetables, beans, tofu, sesame seeds, sea vegetables, and oranges contain lots of usable calcium. Dairy products have calcium with vitamin D added; yogurt, milk, eggs, and cheese are good sources of vitamin D.

## *Jumping into Juicing*

Although the water or juice of mainly fruits has been enjoyed for centuries, it wasn't until the beginning of the 20th century that two men began to look at raw juice as a medical cure. Called the *Roshåft Kur*, or raw juice cure, it was revolutionary at the time, and its developers, Dr. Max Bircher-Benner and Dr. Max Gerson, used it to promote health and well-being for patients suffering from fatigue and stress.

Just about everyone living in the 21st century suffers from fatigue and stress at some point. And raw juicing would be a quick and positive step toward repairing the damage to cells from modern-day stress.



Food flows through your gastrointestinal tract, which extends from your mouth to your bowels, and must be absorbed through the walls of the stomach and intestines before it can enter the bloodstream. Like most things associated with the body, *assimilation* (absorption of nutrients) is complicated. For total transport of nutrients through the intestinal cell wall, key enzymes and minor nutrients must be present. Once absorbed, nutrients circulate to and feed all your tissues by way of your blood. Nutrients, which are tiny molecules, are bound up in the larger cells of carbohydrate, and they're in the water or juice of fruits and vegetables. When you juice, you remove the fiber and cellulose tissue in order to leave the pure water and nutrients. In fact, by juicing, you're performing critical steps in the digestive process, which would normally start by chewing to break down the flesh of fruits and vegetables. All the nutrients in juice are instantly available for moving into the blood and, in fact, they're completely taken up and on their way to repair cells within 10 to 20 minutes of drinking them. They save the body from doing digestive work — the gallbladder, pancreas, and stomach from excreting bile and digestive enzymes and the liver from separating toxins.



Juices are the fastest and easiest way for the body to take up the nutrients it needs to feed and detoxify itself.

If you want to jump-start your adventure into health, jump into juicing. Today's juice machines are leaps ahead of the juicers of years ago. Chapter 3 fills you in on how to buy and care for equipment, but for now, trust me that juicing at home is more economical, faster, cleaner, and more convenient than ever before.

## Savoring Smoothies

Smoothies are the darlings of the healthy-drink world. They taste divine; they can be as nutritious as a salad and as satisfying as a light lunch; they're so easy to make, drink, and clean up after; and they enrich the diet without adding too many calories or unwanted fat. Who wouldn't want to savor them?

Beyond the basics of fruit and fruit juice ingredients, smoothies are exciting in their range of possibilities and are limited only by your imagination. Although fruit smoothies are the most popular by far, vegetable smoothies can be just as rewarding, and adding milk or organic soy boosts protein and calcium.

Smoothies are a delicious, guilt-free alternative to high-sugar, high-calorie iced drinks. For people who love iced-coffee drinks, milkshakes, and the like, smoothies make the transition to healthier drinks easy. You don't need to feel deprived, and you don't have to sacrifice taste and texture while enjoying maximum health benefits. Make your own smoothies and iced drinks (see Chapter 18) and save money while actually doing something healthy for your body.

With dairy ingredients, nuts and seeds, legumes, herbs, and protein supplements, smoothies can be used as the occasional meal replacement (see the breakfast, snack, lunch, and dinner smoothies in Chapters 16 and 17). Check out the incredible ingredients that you can add to smoothies in Chapter 14.

Here are a couple of the benefits you can enjoy by using herbs in smoothies:

- ✓ **Enhanced energy:** The University of Maryland Medical Center says that American ginseng is “widely used to strengthen the immune system, and increase strength and vigor.” The American Cancer Society acknowledges that ginseng is used to provide energy, among other things. One teaspoon of powdered ginseng in smoothies no more than twice a day is all you need.
- ✓ **Improved memory:** Ginkgo biloba increases blood flow to the brain and is widely used in Europe for treating dementia. According to the University of Maryland Medical Center, “A number of studies have found that ginkgo has a positive effect on memory and thinking in people with Alzheimer’s or vascular dementia.” You can add drops of the tincture or stir a teaspoon of the powdered ginkgo into smoothies.

I like to savor fruit smoothies made from fresh local fruit in the morning. I’ve found that if I add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of low-fat cottage cheese or yogurt, it gives me the protein I need for staying focused right up until about an hour before lunch. That’s when I make a vegetable juice as a sort of appetizer, which keeps me satiated and allows me to make really good choices about the lunch I’ll have. In this way, I’ve found a rhythm to getting the most out of juices and smoothies.