

On a New Year's health kick? What to know before swapping real fruits and veggies for V8 juice

January 20 2023, by Clare Mulroy



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In a world of ambiguously labeled "healthy" or "organic" foods, it can be difficult to know what is good for your body.

When it comes to making [healthy choices](#) in the [grocery store](#), the first test to decide whether something is healthy is on the back of the box. According to registered dietician nutritionist Danielle Crumble Smith, shoppers should ask themselves if they can pronounce the ingredients on the nutrition label.

V8 vegetable juice boasts two servings of vegetables in just one 8-ounce glass, but how does it score when put to Crumble Smith's test?

Is V8 juice healthy?

According to parent company Campbell's, V8's Original 100% Vegetable Juice has a fairly short ingredient list.

- Vegetable juice (Water and concentrated juices of tomatoes, carrots, celery, beets, parsley, lettuce, watercress, and spinach)
- Salt
- Vitamin C (Ascorbic Acid)
- Natural flavoring
- Beta carotene
- Citric acid

V8 also has four different types of [energy drinks](#), which contain vegetable juice as well as malic acid, [citric acid](#), natural flavoring from plants, caffeine from black and green tea, sucralose, and vitamins C and B.

On its site, the company reports V8 does not include added sugar or GMO (genetically modified organism) ingredients in its products, other than in its V8 Bloody Mary.

With a short and mostly recognizable ingredient list, V8 juice is a healthy option, says Crumble Smith, but it doesn't come anywhere close

to eating real whole fruits and vegetables.

"Unless you're getting the low sodium [V8], there's a ton of sodium in that," Crumble Smith says. A serving size of V8 contains about 640 milligrams of sodium or 28% of daily intake.

One group that might benefit from drinking V8 is athletes—people who regularly lose large quantities of electrolytes through sweat and could use the high sodium content in V8.

It's also a good source of lycopene, Crumble Smith says, which has been associated with preventing cardiovascular diseases.

Another group is vegans or vegetarians, who might benefit from the B vitamins in V8 energy drinks because B vitamins are found mostly in [animal products](#), and those who opt not to eat meat may need to supplement their vitamin intake.

Can V8 replace daily fruit and vegetable intake?

The main drawback of using V8 to get your daily fruit and vegetable intake is you're missing out on a lot of fiber. The U.S. Department of Agriculture recommends 28 grams of fiber per day based on an intake of 2,000 calories, which may be appropriate for some U.S. adults but not all.

An 8-ounce cup of V8 may contain 80% of your vitamin C intake, but it's got just 2 grams of fiber or 7% of recommended daily intake. V8's High-Fiber 100% Vegetable Juice has 6 grams of fiber.

"Try to eat your fruits and veggies as opposed to drinking them," Crumble Smith says. "And if you would prefer to drink them, then putting them in a smoothie where you're actually blending the whole

fruit and [vegetable](#) and getting the fiber, that's actually going to be best."

Those kicking their New Year's health resolutions into high gear may be tempted to try a [juice](#) cleanse, but lost nutrients are precisely why Crumble Smith warns against it.

"Sure, you might not feel as bloated just because there's nothing to digest but in reality, our liver is designed to naturally be able to detox our body," she says. "Oftentimes at the end of it, people are just so hungry from not eating anything that they end up ... eating a lot of carbs and sugars just because their body has been lacking in nutrients and is seeking energy."

A more productive way to transition to a healthier lifestyle is by making gradual changes, Crumble Smith says. This could be swapping out a daily bag of chips for carrots or grabbing a bowl of fruit for a snack.

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Citation: On a New Year's health kick? What to know before swapping real fruits and veggies for V8 juice (2023, January 20) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2023-01-year-health-swapping-real-fruits.html>

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