

On Nutrition: Are produce powders beneficial?

March 17 2023, by Barbara Intermill



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Sally K from Pennsylvania writes: "My husband and I read your article

on nutrition in the Republican Herald. We are curious as to the benefits of Balance of Nature, Red Beet powder and other supplements that are heavily advertised on TV."

I was curious, too, Sally. Let's start with Balance of Nature fruits and [vegetable](#) powders. According to their website, these are capsules of powder made from 16 different fruits and 15 types of vegetables through "an advanced vacuum-cold process which stabilizes the maximum nutrient content."

The company states they have hundreds of thousands of customers worldwide. And lots of testimonials, if you haven't escaped their television advertisements.

Here's the issue: While we have overwhelming evidence that eating a variety of fruits and vegetables is a powerful way to protect our health, the research on the effects of powdered forms of produce on humans is limited.

Why is that? Unlike medications that must pass strict guidelines for safety and effectiveness before they can be sold, [dietary supplements](#) do not have to prove their products are safe or even effective, even though they are expected to be. If it turns out that a [dietary supplement](#) is tainted with other ingredients or is otherwise unsafe, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration can only take action after it is on the market.

Consumer Lab, an independent test lab for health and nutrition products, recently reported on their findings about Balance of Nature, along with a variety of other fruit and vegetable [supplements](#). They found that fruit and veggie supplements broadly were not substitutes for getting the recommended daily intakes of fruits and vegetables. According to the review: "At best, only one-fifth of the adult daily requirement might be met with the suggested daily serving of any of these products."

These products are also expensive, says Dr. Tod Cooperman of Consumer Labs. The combined cost for a 30-day supply of the "Fruits" and "Veggies" supplements is about \$90 (or about \$70 from continuous orders). "So you'll be spending as much as \$3 per day and will still need to get about 90% of your fruits and vegetables from other sources, such as fresh produce."

In fact, you can get more fruit (and fiber) from a single apple than from most fruit supplements, and at much lower cost, says Cooperman.

To their credit, on Balance of Nature's website, following a question asking whether their supplements would replace fruits and vegetables in one's diet, the company's response was: "Fruits and vegetables are an important part of a balanced diet. We encourage good eating habits. You can never eat too many fruits and vegetables."

In short, although these [fruit](#) and vegetable powders may be OK, it appears you're not getting much for your money.

Will need to save comments on Red Beet powder for a future column. Keep those questions for National Nutrition Month coming!

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