Fruit Juice: Too sweet to be true?

For many children and their parents, fruit juice can be a tasty and easy way to meet their recommended fruit servings for the day. Pure fruit drinks provide a healthy dose of Vitamin C, foliate, potassium, and disease fighting anti-oxidants. However, there are two major things to keep in mind when grabbing a bottle of juice:

1) Look for 100% juice

Oddly, what is labelled as juice is not always made from real fruit. Stay away from bottles labelled ‘juice drink,’ ‘juice cocktail’ and ‘fruit flavoured drink.’ These rarely contain more than 10% real juice, and instead are flavoured with high fructose corn syrup and other potentially harmful additives. It is necessary to read the back of the container, where the actual juice content is listed.

If a juice does not contain the nutritional benefits of fruit, it is simply a regular sugary drink, akin to pop or even sugar water. In fact, Health Canada’s Food Guide says “Fruit flavoured drinks do not count as Food Guide Servings of vegetables and fruit.” (Note that this does not include 100% juice).

Brands with little to no fruit: Snapple drinks, Sunny Delight, Five Alive, any ‘juice drink,’ ‘juice cocktail,’ ‘fruit flavoured drink’

Better Bets: 100% juice brands, such as Mott’s and Juicy Juice

2) Be aware of sugar content

Even 100% juice can be unhealthy! Fruit naturally contains sugar, called fructose, and any type of sugar in high concentration is detrimental to a healthy diet. Calories and sugar, whether from fruit or less wholesome sources, can cause weight gain, tooth decay, and a higher risk of diabetes.

Highest (natural) sugar content: Apple, Grape

Better bets: Orange, Grapefruit

The Keys are Observation and Moderation

Observation: Read labels! Don’t be fooled by slogans such as “made with real fruit juice,” because it may only be 10% of the total beverage! Make sure your purchase is worth the money you spent!

Moderation: Even though 100% juice has a high sugar content – sometimes equivalent to pop! – it still offers better nutritional content than other sugary drinks. After all, it still carries the vitamins and nutrients of fruit! However, most experts agree that whole fruit is better, and that fruit juice should be limited to 12 ounces per day, less for small children.

So, enjoy your refreshing glass of fruit juice – just make sure you choose wisely so that juice is both sweet to your taste buds and sweet to your body!
**Synopsis:**

For many children and their parents, fruit juice can be a tasty and easy way to meet their recommended fruit servings for the day. Pure fruit drinks provide a healthy dose of Vitamin C, foliate, potassium, and disease fighting anti-oxidants. However, there are two major things to keep in mind when grabbing a bottle of juice:

Be observant: Drinks labelled ‘juice drink,’ ‘juice cocktail’ and ‘fruit flavoured drink’ rarely have more than 10% actual fruit content. This means that by drinking these products, you are not receiving a daily serving of fruit, but only consuming a sugary drink with a nutritional value akin to pop! To find a fruit juice that truly delivers on its nutritional promises you need to be aware of what to look for on food labels – only buy juices that say 100% juice above the nutritional information on the back.

Be moderate in how much you consume: even 100% juice naturally contains high amounts of sugar! Vitamins in fruit juice aside, consuming too much sugar can lead to weight gain, tooth decay and a higher risk of diabetes. Fruit juice can be beneficial, but limit yourself to 12 ounces per day, less for small children.

So, enjoy your refreshing glass of fruit juice – just make sure you choose wisely so that juice is both sweet to your taste buds and sweet to your body!