

Drink real fruit juices

Before we reach for a cool glass of juice, consider some guidelines:

Portion is key. Even freshly prepared unadulterated juices can be very high in sugar and consuming large amounts can provide excess calories and sugar. One way to reduce this risk is to have half the amount fresh juice, for example four ounces and top up with four ounces water. You will still get the benefits of the four ounces of juice and a refreshing eight-ounce drink, thanks to the added water.

You can also consume the whole fruit, for example, one large orange with pulp and reap the benefits of the fibre along with the vitamins and other nutrients, then quench your thirst with water.

When you purchase juices, make sure you are getting juice and not a whole lot of sugar. Read the list of ingredients, if the first one is some form of sugar with water and/or juice falling somewhere third or fourth on the list, it is not juice.

Words such as juice cocktail, juice drink, juice flavoured, also indicate that you are getting a whole lot of sugar and little juice.

For those who are able, blend vegetables such as cucumbers which are low in calories, delicately flavoured, and add lime, ginger or orange juice. If you do not have the time to make your own juice, shop carefully, read labels and avoid the high-sugar options.

Children should be especially careful as they tend to consume large amounts of juices which can contribute to weight gain and obesity which we are seeing in more children. One four-ounce serving is enough for the younger age group and a maximum of 12 ounces for those as old as 18. Provide more whole fruits and water to quench their thirst.

Coconut water is also a great option for thirst quenching.

Beat the heat safely with more water, whole fruits, unadulterated fruit and vegetable juices. Stay away from the high-sugar options, as these will ruin your health goals. Make vegetable juices without the added sugar as well as your own fruit juices without the added sugar.