

Letter to the Editor

Vegetable juicing- a strategy for enhancing vegetables in the Indian diet

Sir,

The production of vegetables in India is sufficient to meet the recommended dietary allowance (RDA) for its population. Yet, it is a challenge for many Indians to consume adequate amounts of vegetables through their daily diets. The per capita production of vegetables in India stands at 318 g while the per capita consumption figure is 216 g.¹ The RDA for vegetables in the Indian diet is 300 g.¹ The deficit of approximately 80 g/day of vegetables in the Indian diet needs to be made up.

Daily consumption of seasonally available vegetables in the form of home-made vegetable juice (especially the low cost green leafy vegetables) is an effective strategy to remove the vegetable deficit in the Indian diet. Vegetable juice has the advantage of being low in sugars and cost, compared to fruit and fruit juices. The role of fresh vegetable juices in combating many lifestyle diseases as well as to improve the overall health status of individuals, is well documented.^{2,3}

In the dietary guidelines for Indians, recommendations have been made to accommodate more servings of fruits and vegetables per day, but the consumption of vegetable juice to meet the RDA deficit of vegetables, has not been made a part of the overall nutritional strategy.¹ Motivation to consume more vegetables as part of the Indian diet is a challenge and must be addressed by making vegetable juice organoleptically favorable to those needing its taste modification, by the addition of taste enhancing spices and condiments. Indians being predominantly vegetarians, this proposal to recommend and to popularize home-made vegetable juice as part of a healthy Indian diet, is very promising in meeting nutritional challenges faced by the country, especially women and girls.

Vegetable juicing procedure for Indian households

All vegetables used for juicing must be washed as per the guidelines. Those vegetables that do not require peeling, such as green leafy vegetables, must be blanched followed by immediately cooling in iced water to render their surface microbiologically safe and to limit nutrient degradation due to heat, respectively. A blender (commonly available in Indian households) instead of the juicer must be used to make vegetable paste to which required amount of potable water should be added to facilitate its sieving. Some portion of the vegetable pulp can be added back to the sieved juice to increase its fibre content. The vegetable juice should be consumed with diet fats to allow efficient uptake of fat soluble vitamins by the body.

Urmila Duhan*

Formerly at the Department of Medicine, University of Chicago, IL, USA

***Correspondence to:**

Dr. Urmila Duhan,
E-mail: uduhan@uicalumni.org

REFERENCES

1. Indian council of medical research. <http://ninindia.org/DietaryguidelinesforIndians-Finaldraft.pdf> (accessed on 16th April 2016).
2. Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/what-should-you-eat/vegetables-and-fruits/> (accessed on 16th April 2016).
3. World Health Organization: WHO. <http://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/fruit/en/> (accessed on 16th April 2016).

Cite this article as: Duhan U. Vegetable juicing- a strategy for enhancing vegetables in the Indian diet. *Int J Community Med Public Health* 2016;3:1682-1682.