

Information from Diabetes UK

Fruit juices and smoothies

Many people have contacted us confused about fruit, fruit juices and smoothies and whether they are something you can have if you have diabetes.

So we've set out to answer your questions and explain the difference between drinking fruit juice and smoothies and eating whole fruit and how this can affect your diabetes management and overall health.

What is fructose?

All fruit, fruit juices and smoothies contain a naturally occurring sugar called fructose. Fructose from whole fruit doesn't add to your intake of free (or added) sugar, but in fruit juice or a smoothie it does

What is free (added) sugar?

Free (added) sugar includes the sugars added to foods by manufacturers, eg in cakes, chocolates, jam, some pasta sauces, fizzy drinks and breakfast cereals. It also includes the sugar found in fruit juices, smoothies and honey.

A recent report by the Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN), stated that we need to reduce our intake of free (added) sugars by half.

The report recommends that we should consume no more than 5 per cent of our energy from free sugar.

Fructose adds to your intake of free (added) sugars. Whole fruit, on the other hand, does not.

Whole fruit contains fibre (roughage), vitamins and minerals, which are good for your overall health. The fibre helps to slow down the speed the fructose is absorbed into your blood stream and can help you feel fuller for longer. This is why it's better to eat whole fruit, rather than fruit in the form of juice or a smoothie.

Fruit juice and smoothies, on the other hand, have most of the fibre (roughage) removed when they are made and it's very easy to drink large quantities in a

short space of time. This means you could be drinking a lot of extra calories, carbs and sugar.

We know that too much of our sugar intake is coming from juices and smoothies, so it makes sense to cut down. The good news is that we are not eating enough fruit, so this is something you can eat more of. Though be mindful of serving sizes – it's easy to overdo the dried fruit, grapes and tropical fruits without really thinking about it.

There's no need to totally avoid sugar, but aim to cut down on your free (or added) sugar intake. Remember, this doesn't include sugar present in whole fruit, so try to meet the five a day target. This will help protect you against stroke, heart disease and certain cancers.