



The following reviews are published in the January 2015 issue of [Advances in Nutrition](#).

100% Fruit Juice May Offer Health Benefits

Review suggests 100% pure fruit juices can play important role in healthy diets

Current health guidelines in the United States promote the consumption of a variety of fruits and vegetables each day. Strong evidence links diets rich in fruits and vegetables with improved health and a reduced risk of major chronic diseases, including heart disease and diabetes. Although the health benefits of fruit and vegetables are well established, there is no clear consensus about the effects of consuming the juices that are extracted from them. Concerns about the lower fiber content and the higher calorie density, for example, have prompted suggestions that fruit juices—even 100% pure fruit juices—are comparable to sugar-sweetened beverages, which are linked to obesity.

Dr. Dianne A. Hyson set out to find out whether these common beliefs about fruit juices were justified by evaluating the results of scientific studies published over the last two decades. Her article, "[A Review and Critical Analysis of the Scientific Literature Related to 100% Fruit Juice and Human Health](#)," was published in the January 2015 issue of *Advances in Nutrition*, the international review journal of the American Society for Nutrition. The article points to recent evidence linking 100% fruit juice consumption to positive outcomes in both preventing and managing such diseases as cancer, cardiovascular disease, hypertension, inflammation, and urinary tract infection. Dr. Hyson focused on 100% pure fruit juices that are commonly available in markets, including apple, cranberry, grape, grapefruit, orange, and pomegranate juice.

Looking at the relationship between 100% fruit juice consumption and cancer, Dr. Hyson pointed to a large prospective study of more than 35,000 women that found women who regularly drank apple juice or cider had a 35% lower risk of developing non-Hodgkin lymphoma. Other studies have found that pomegranate juice may have protective effects against the development and progression of prostate cancer.

Cranberry juice has long been touted for its ability to prevent and treat urinary tract infections. Emerging research does support these claims. A systematic review of recent studies, for example, reported a 38% overall lower risk of urinary tract infection associated with cranberry juice consumption. Interestingly, cranberry juice tended to be more protective than cranberry in other forms such as capsules or tablets sold as supplements.

Dr. Hyson concludes that, despite promising findings, "there are many unanswered questions related to fruit juice and health in humans. There is a clear need for larger, well-controlled studies of longer duration with well-defined outcomes." While many nutritionists and health care providers view juice as a high caloric beverage contributing to obesity, this review shows that 100% juice can confer health benefits. More research is needed to clarify its benefits and exactly how it benefits distinct population groups.

Energy Drinks and Alcohol

Review published in Advances in Nutrition finds energy drinks fuel desire for more alcohol

So-called "energy drinks" are the fastest growing segment in the beverage market. Most energy drinks are sweetened carbonated beverages with high amounts of caffeine. They may also contain such ingredients as taurine, guarana, ginseng and various vitamins, which manufacturers claim further boost energy, focus, and concentration.

As energy drinks have become more popular, they have also become increasingly popular mixers with alcohol. Many bars now offer such options as vodka Red Bulls

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or Jägerbombs (a shot of Jägermeister placed in a glass filled with an energy drink).

A review published in the January 2015 issue of *Advances in Nutrition*, "[Can Energy Drinks Increase the Desire for More Alcohol?](#)," critically evaluates the findings of scientific studies exploring the short- and long-term effects of mixing energy drinks with alcohol. According to the review author, Dr. Cecile A Marcinski, emerging research indicates that the consumption of energy drinks mixed with alcohol may be much riskier than the consumption of alcohol alone.

Studies have demonstrated that the combination of alcohol and energy drinks is associated with excessive intake of alcohol. As a result, the consumption of alcohol mixed with energy drinks leads to greater rates of binge drinking, alcohol poisoning, and alcohol dependence when compared to alcohol consumption alone.

When an energy drink is combined with alcohol, the urge to drink more alcohol is higher than with the same amount of alcohol alone. The experience of drinking alcohol appears to be more rewarding when alcohol is combined with energy drinks. Researchers believe that it is the caffeine which drives the urge to drink more.

Consuming alcohol mixed with energy drinks is most common among young and underage drinkers, drinkers who are more likely to experience the harms and hazards associated with alcohol use. In particular, the adolescent brain is still undergoing structural development, making it more susceptible to the neurotoxic effects of alcohol.

Due to the known dangers of excessive alcohol consumption, consumers should be extremely cautious about mixing alcohol with energy drinks. Given that caffeine in other foods and beverages increases preference for those products as well, the author notes that "further research on alcohol mixed with energy drinks may elucidate the underlying mechanisms that contribute to alcohol dependence."

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