

SUPERJUICES ON TRIAL

We put the leading brands under a laboratory microscope to see which are best for you.

IN A PERFECT WORLD WE'D ALL EAT THREE APPLES A DAY TO get our daily dose of vitamins and antioxidants, but let's face it: Totting around a fruit basket isn't easy. Which is why some companies claim that drinking their "superjuices" is nearly as good as chowing down on a Granny Smith. American consumers have bought the hype, boosting juice sales to \$662 million in 2007. But are juices a sound substitute for the real thing? Miriam Pappo, director of clinical nutrition at Montefiore Medical Center in New York, says four

ingredients make a juice nutritionally beneficial: phenolic acids (to prevent cancer), anthocyanins (to prevent aging), vitamin C (to aid in healing wounds), and beta-carotene (to boost the immune system). Plus: "Studies have found that if you replenish your glycogen levels within 15 minutes of exercising — which is easily done with juice — it is very helpful for the next workout," Pappo says. We commissioned and paid for independent lab tests* of several juices to find out which ones are worth reaching for. —JAMIE BECKMAN



Mind & Body

1. BOLTHOUSE FARMS

THE CLAIM: "Each serving delivers over 700 mg of anthocyanins plus a wide range of other vitamins, minerals, fibers, and phytochemicals."

THE REALITY: Our test found only 162 mg, but that's still the most of all the juices.

BEST FOR: Preventing memory loss. Anthocyanins can enhance brain cell connections and even stimulate neuronal regeneration.

PRICE: \$5 for 32 oz; \$1.25/serving

4. WELCH'S

THE CLAIM: "An antioxidant superjuice — you could call it the 'original' superjuice, it has been around so long."

THE REALITY: The highest level of phenolics in the bunch, plus good anthocyanins and vitamin C.

BEST FOR: Winelike health benefits. Phenolics (also found in vino) can slow the growth of certain cancers and fight bad bacteria and viruses.

PRICE: \$3 for 32 oz; \$0.75/serving

2. VEMMA

THE CLAIM: "Quite possibly the most powerful liquid antioxidant program in the world!"

THE REALITY: Sky-high vitamin C levels and solid in antioxidants; the only juice that contained beta-carotene.

BEST FOR: Staying healthy. Beta-carotene helps cells communicate, which in turn enhances the immune system and flushes out tumor-causing "old" cells.

PRICE: \$30 for 32 oz; \$1.88/serving (a 2-oz shot per day)

5. AGROLABS

THE CLAIM: "You reap the benefits of cellular anti-aging, revitalized hair, skin and nails, all-day energy, and antioxidants that scavenge free radicals."

THE REALITY: Contained only moderate levels of anthocyanins and phenolics.

BEST FOR: A cheap drink. It probably won't knock 20 years off your appearance, but it does offer decent antioxidant levels.

PRICE: \$27 for 32 oz; \$0.84/serving (a 1-oz shot per day)

3. TROPICANA

THE CLAIM: "Our 100% Orange Juice has the delicious taste you love and the vitamin C nutrition you need."

THE REALITY: Superhigh levels of vitamin C, unsurprisingly, and it also had fair levels of phenolics.

BEST FOR: Fighting colds. For those not into a grape taste, the C in this (shown in some to help shorten colds) is a nice, cheap second option.

PRICE: \$3 for 32 oz; \$0.75/serving

6. NAKED

THE CLAIM: "If antioxidants are the foot soldiers in the war against cell-damaging free radicals, then Pomegranate Blueberry is a Five-Star General."

THE REALITY: It ranked second among those tested for levels of anthocyanins and fourth for phenolics.

BEST FOR: Fighting cancer. But only a bit better than Welch's, which is cheaper.

PRICE: \$5 for 32 oz; \$1.25/serving

NOT SO SUPER

THESE WELL-MARKETED JUICES DIDN'T LIVE UP TO EXPECTATIONS.

MONAVIE ACTIVE

Packaged in a high-end-looking wine bottle, MonaVie tested extremely low in anthocyanins and phenolics. Even apple juice (which also tested poorly) has more phenolics than this Utah-based company's juice. Plus, MonaVie's vitamin C level was five times lower than that of Welch's Grape Juice. That's not many nutrients, especially at \$1.20 a serving.

KAGOME PURPLE ROOTS & FRUITS

This juice, from Tokyo-based Kagome, is available for purchase in the United States on Amazon.com. It combines a number of fruits and vegetables, but was a "non-detect" on vitamin C and beta-carotene. Even its high phenolics and okay anthocyanin levels don't justify the price (\$0.94 per serving). All of that translates to a let-down, especially when the name — Purple Roots & Fruits — sounds so healthy.

*All tests were conducted and approved by contract-testing laboratory ChromaDex (chromadex.com). Test results may vary up to 15 percent.