

Pure juices can reduce disease risk, says review

By staff reporter

29/01/2007 - **Pure fruit and vegetable juices are generally regarded as healthy, despite containing less fibre than the whole fruit. A review of studies into their potential to reduce risk of chronic disease may serve to validate the popular perception and give more leverage in the functional drinks category.**

According to a recent survey by the UK's Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, consumption of fruit juice in the country rose 24 per cent last year to 366ml per person per week as people plump for healthier alternatives to sugar-laden fizzy drinks.

But some regulators have considered juices to be less healthy than whole fruit and vegetables, an opinion that is transmitted in consumption advice. For instance, while the UK's Food Standards Agency recommends five portions of fruit and vegetables per day, juice may only be counted as one of these, no matter how much is drunk.

Likewise the US Department of Agriculture says that juice is "*generally less desirable because it has less fibre*".

However the review of 11 studies, conducted by UK researchers and published in the *International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition* last year, concluded that the cancer and cardiovascular benefits may be more attributable to antioxidants rather than fibre.

They say that the view that pure fruit and vegetable juices are nutritionally inferior to fruit and vegetables, in relation to chronic disease risk reduction, is not justified.

As well as providing a greater draw towards juices for health-conscious consumers, the review could also spell good news for functional beverage makers, who often use juices as a base product because they are generally perceived by consumers to be healthy.

Market researchers are wont to point out that consumers are sensitive to the kinds of products seen as suitable carriers for functional ingredients. Fruit and vegetable juices already have a healthy halo, so industry sees them as ideal for this use.

Products that are normally seen as treat foods, on the other hand, such as confectionery and sweet baked goods that are usually high in fat and/or sugar may send out a contradictory message on health.

Indeed, the beverage market presents such opportunities for healthy ingredient companies that developing a soluble version is seen to give an important boost.

For instance, [Alltracel](#) recently said the development of a soluble version of its cellulose heart bioactive was a major breakthrough towards commercialisation, since suitability for beverages is a big draw for food companies.

But for [Provexis](#), the company behind the Sirco tomato-based juice drink, the opposite is also true. It has been working with an industry partner to make it more suitable for use in other food categories - not just [juice drinks](#). Source: *International Journal of Food Sciences and Nutrition*
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"Can pure fruit and vegetable juices protect against cancer and cardiovascular disease too? A review of the evidence"

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