

Hosted by [Back to Google News](#)

# Apple juice can pose a health risk \_ from calories

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE, AP Chief Medical Writer – 22 hours ago   1

It's true — apple juice can pose a risk to your health. But not necessarily from the trace amounts of arsenic that people are arguing about.

Despite the government's consideration of new limits on arsenic, nutrition experts say apple juice's real danger is to waistlines and children's teeth. Apple juice has few natural nutrients, lots of calories and, in some cases, more sugar than soda has. It trains a child to like very sweet things, displaces better beverages and foods, and adds to the obesity problem, its critics say.

"It's like sugar water," said Judith Stern, a nutrition professor at the University of California, Davis, who has consulted for candy makers as well as for Weight Watchers. "I won't let my 3-year-old grandson drink apple juice."

Many juices are fortified with vitamins, so they're not just empty calories. But that doesn't appease some nutritionists.

"If it wasn't healthy in the first place, adding vitamins doesn't make it into a health food," and if it causes weight gain, it's not a healthy choice, said Karen Ansel, a registered dietitian in New York and spokeswoman for the American Dietetic Association.

The American Academy of Pediatrics says juice can be part of a healthy diet, but its policy is blunt: "Fruit juice offers no nutritional benefit for infants younger than 6 months" and no benefits over whole fruit for older kids.

Kids under 12 consume 28 percent of all juice and juice drinks, according to the academy. Nationwide, apple juice is second only to orange juice in popularity. Americans slurp 267 ounces of apple juice on average each year, according to the Food Institute's Almanac of Juice Products and the Juice Products Association, a trade group. Lots more is consumed as an ingredient in juice drinks and various foods.

Only 17 percent of the apple juice sold in the U.S. is produced here. The rest comes from other countries, mostly China, Argentina, Chile and Brazil, the association says.

Television's Dr. Mehmet Oz made that a key point a few months ago when he raised an alarm — some say a false alarm — over arsenic in apple juice, based on tests his show commissioned by a private lab. The Food and Drug Administration said that its own tests disagreed and that apple juice is safe.

However, on Wednesday, after Consumer Reports did its own tests on several juice brands and called along with other consumer groups for stricter standards, the FDA said it will examine whether its restrictions on the amount of arsenic allowed in apple juice are stringent enough.

Some forms of arsenic, such as the type found in pesticides, can be toxic and may pose a cancer risk if consumed at high levels or over a long period.

All juice sold in the United States must be safe and meet U.S. standards, said Pat Faison, technical director for the juice association. As for making good nutrition choices, "a lot of the information that people need about fruit juices is on the label," she said.

So what's on those labels?



Photo 2 of 2   

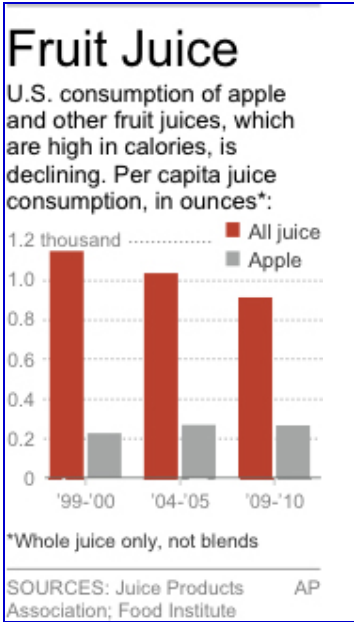
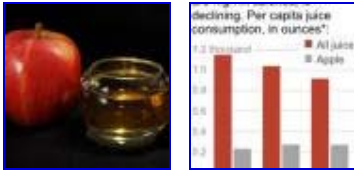


Chart shows per capita consumption of juice



Carbohydrates, mostly sugars, in a much higher concentration than in milk. Juice has a small amount of protein and minerals and lacks the fiber in whole fruit, the pediatrics academy notes.

Drinking juice delivers a lot of calories quickly so you don't realize how much you've consumed, whereas you would have to eat a lot of apples to get the same amount, and "you would feel much, much more full from the apples," Ansel said.

"Whole fruits are much better for you," said Dr. Frank Greer, a University of Wisconsin, Madison, professor and former head of the pediatrics academy's nutrition committee.

He noted that the WIC program — the U.S. Department of Agriculture's nutrition program for Women, Infants and Children — revised its rules in 2005 to replace juice with baby food fruits and vegetables for children over 6 months. More than half of all infants born in the U.S. are eligible for WIC, and the government "really cut back severely on the ability of mothers to get fruit juices" through the program, Greer said.

If you or your family drinks juice, here is some advice from nutrition experts:

—Choose a juice fortified with calcium and vitamin D-3.

—Give children only pasteurized juice — that's the only type safe from germs that can cause serious disease.

—Don't give juice before 6 months of age, and never put it in bottles or covered cups that allow babies and children to consume it throughout the day, which can cause tooth decay. For the same reason, don't give infants juice at bedtime.

—Limit juice to 4 to 6 ounces per day for children ages 1 to 6, and 8 to 12 ounces for those ages 7 to 18.

—Encourage kids to eat fruit.

—Don't be swayed by healthy-sounding label claims. "No sugar added" doesn't mean it isn't full of naturally occurring sugar. And "cholesterol-free" is silly — only animal products contain cholesterol.

*Marilynn Marchione can be followed on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/MMarchioneAP>*

On the Net:

- Academy of Pediatrics on juice: <http://tinyurl.com/qtkls>
- FDA: <http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm271394.htm>
- WIC program advice: <http://bit.ly/sYXqAi>
- Industry: <http://www.fruitjuicefacts.org>

Copyright © 2011 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

## Related articles

[Yep, my kids drink arsenic](#)

Canton Repository (blog) - 23 hours ago

[Arsenic in fruit juice reviewed](#)

Santa Rosa Press Democrat - 1 day ago

[FOX5 Vegas - KVVUConcern over arsenic in apple juice could lead to FDA changes](#)

KVVU Las Vegas - 1 day ago

[More coverage \(1\) »](#)



[Add News to your Google Homepage](#)