

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.



Amy Sancetta, AP

The FDA said it will examine whether its restrictions on the amount of arsenic allowed in apple juice are stringent enough.

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."

MORE: FDA examines level of arsenic in 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](#).

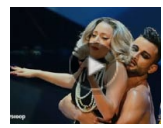
The [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) says juice can be part of a healthy diet, but its policy is blunt: "Fruit juice offers no nutritional benefit for infants younger than 6 months" and no benefits over whole fruit for older kids.

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.

Videos you may be interested in



Lady Gaga Thinks She'll Be Single Forever



Horsemeat ban lifted, local groups upset



Sponsored Link
1 Rule to a Flat Body: [ConsumerTipsDaily.c](#)
by [Taboola](#)
More videos

Ads by Google

Type 2 Diabetes Food Tips
Recipes, Meal Planners, and Tools to Help Lead a Healthier Lifestyle.
[merckengage.com](#)

Cholesterol Lowering Food
Lower Your Bad Cholesterol Now. Find Great Foods That Will Help!
[StayingFit.com](#)

Labels, Stickers & Decals
Custom Printed Labels, Stickers 1 to 8 colors, Quality & Fast
[www.sjprinting.com](#)

Most Popular

Stories

- Study shows men don't think about sex as...
- [FDA examines level of arsenic in apple juice](#)
- [Apple juice can pose a health risk - from...](#)
- [Horses could soon be slaughtered for meat...](#)
- [What's trendy in baby names? Lists help](#)

Videos

- [Morgan Sacco talks about his sister Aubrey, missing since May 2010](#)
- [Strong Santa Ana winds topple trees, power lines](#)
- [Five questions for Michael Fassbender](#)

Most Popular E-mail Newsletter

Sign up to get:

Top viewed stories, photo galleries and community posts of the day

Most popular right now:

[Jackson 'X Factor' results: Which two beat it?](#)





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?

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.

Copyright 2011 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

For more information about [reprints & permissions](#), visit our [FAQ's](#). To report corrections and clarifications, contact Standards Editor [Brent Jones](#). For publication consideration in the newspaper, send comments to letters@usatoday.com. Include name, phone number, city and state for verification. To view our corrections, go to corrections.usatoday.com.



Helping breast health



RESOURCE GUIDE

Coping with Breast Cancer

Watch an educational series from Nurse.com

Your Life: Health

More from USATODAY

Stanford assistant coach Chester McGlockton dies at age 42 *USATODAY.com in Sports*

Tim Tebow responds to Jake Plummer's comments on his faith *USATODAY.com in The Huddle*

Jawbone Up fitness wristband aims to get you off the sofa *USATODAY.com in Tech*

Measles outbreaks on the rise across Europe *USATODAY.com - Your life*

Multitasking stresses out working moms more than dads *USATODAY.com - Your life*

More from the web

Top 10 Things You Should NOT Say to a Fibromyalgia Patient *HealthCentral.com*

Is The 2011 Hyundai Sonata Design Too Bold? #YouTellUs *Family Car Guide*

10 Ways to Stay Depression-Free *Lifscript.com*

Study: Poor Eating Habits Develop Early in Babies, Toddlers *Parents.com*

Can You Feel A Coming Heart Attack in Your Toes? *Newsmax.com*

[?]

USA TODAY is now using Facebook Comments on our stories and blog posts to provide an enhanced user experience. To post a comment, log into Facebook and then "Add" your comment. To report spam or abuse, click the "X" in the upper right corner of the comment box. To find out more, read the [FAQ](#) and [Conversation Guidelines](#).



Post to Facebook



Mickey Cashen · ★Top Commenter

"...apple juice's real danger is to waistlines and children's teeth..."Fruit juice offers no nutritional benefit..." WRONG! The Harvard Medical School Guide to Eating Healthy, p. 131, says: "...real juice can be an important part of a healthy diet." It does say to watch the Calories from it. Note also that fruit sugars cause significantly fewer cavities because fruit sugar's clearance rate from the mouth is much faster than table sugar. It's only a danger to waistlines IF the children are not getting enough exercise. In that case, the REAL DANGER is not the apple juice, it's the lack of exercise and it's effect on weakening children's bones, tendons, muscles including the heart, and other organs. And if they ARE getting the exercise to make their bodies strong, there's nothing better than fruit juice to quickly supply energy...See [More](#)

Reply · Like · 2 hours ago



Amy Deater · Muskegon CC

Finally, someone is addressing the real problem of our kids consuming high levels of fruit juice; its not the arsenic, its the empty calories.

Reply · Like · 57 minutes ago



Ads by Google

Weight Loss for Women

Safely & Effectively Lose Weight!
Safely Lose Up To 2-5 lbs per Week.

www.Medifast1.com/Womens_Health

50% off at Salon Cecilia

In New York, \$25 for \$50 toward any weave, braiding, twist, or...

www.google.com/offers

Schwan's® Official Site

Delicious Time Saving Meals.
Great Tasting Meals starting at \$5+

schwans.com

Advertisement



Your Life USA Today



- | | | | | | | | |
|---------------|------------------|---------------------|-----------|---------------|----------------|--------------|--------|
| Health | Fitness | Food | Family | Relationships | Mind & Soul | Health Care | Pets |
| • Alternative | • Exercise | • Recipes & cooking | • Babies | • Dating | • Doing Good | • Hospitals | • Cats |
| • Alzheimer's | • Family fitness | | • Daycare | • Marriage | • Spirituality | • Government | • Dogs |

- Autism challenge
- Breast cancer
- Cancer
- Cold & flu
- Dental
- Depression
- Diabetes
- Heart disease
- Kids' health
- Men's health
- Mental health
- Women's health
- Diet & nutrition
- Safety
- Pregnancy
- Special needs
- Teens & young adults
- Education
- Doctors & nurses

[Home](#) | [News](#) | [Travel](#) | [Money](#) | [Sport](#) | [Life](#) | [Your Life](#) | [Tech](#) | [Weather](#) Visit our Partners: [USA WEEKEND](#) | [USA TODAY LIVE](#) | [Sports Weekly](#) | [Education](#) | [Space.com](#) | [Travel Tips](#)

[Contact us](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Pressroom](#) | [Developer](#) | [Media Lounge](#) | [Jobs](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Reprints/Permissions](#) | [Privacy Notice/Your California Privacy Rights](#) | [Ad Choices](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [Site Index](#)

2011 USA Today, a division of **Gannett Co. Inc.**

