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Smoothieology 101: How To Build A Healthy Smoothie

By Andrea Holwegner BSc, RD

Why the buzz about smoothies?

Many Canadians fall short in their fruit and veggie consumption and smoothies are a great way to get more of the key vitamins, minerals, fibre and phytonutrients into your diet that prevent chronic disease and increase health. Smoothies are a great solution for breakfast on the go and a healthy snack option for both kids and adults. They are also a top choice for post workout recovery for athletes.

Veggies can be added to smoothies?

Yes! Veggies can be added to smoothies! My favorite additions are kale, spinach and avocado but you can also add cucumber, celery and more! As the consulting dietitian for [Jugo Juice](#) I was very excited to hear that one of the top selling smoothie in Canada was the Mighty Kale smoothie.



Based on the success of this and also the fact that cauliflower was this years trendy veggie (and a highly nutritious option for cancer prevention and good health) I challenged the Juice Juice team to invent a smoothie with cauliflower. Last week they launched two [smoothies](#) with cauliflower in them that taste great!

Will kids drink a smoothie with veggies?

A month ago I spent the afternoon teaching 25 kids aged 3-5 years old at my sons school. I loved seeing how kids responded to new foods when you are contagiously optimistic, get them involved and give recipes fun names. Research with kids shows that the best way to get kids interested in trying a healthy food is to give them a fun name and get them involved in cooking.

We made "[Superhero Smoothies](#)" with mango, pineapple, unsweetened juice and kale (the special "superpower" ingredient). When I excitedly pulled out a large bag of kale only a handful of kids knew what it was. My favourite part was when I gave kids the opportunity to tear the kale into bite-sized pieces, there was lots of buzz and excitement and green teeth from unprompted sampling. I didn't tell them it was nutritious nor did I encourage them to try the

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kale, they sampled it on their own. Sometimes peer pressure is a good thing, the results were 21 out of 25 kids loved the kale smoothie!

What are the best ingredients to add to a smoothie?

I like to think of smoothie building in five easy steps:

1. Start with fruit

- Fresh or frozen unsweetened strawberries, blueberries, blackberries, raspberries, mango, pineapple, banana, peach and more!

2. Add a healthy liquid

- 100% unsweetened juice, milk, almond milk, soy milk, rice milk, coconut water or fresh pressed vegetable juice.

3. Consider a veggie

- Fresh kale, spinach, swiss chard, avocado, cucumber as well as steamed veggies such as cauliflower, carrots and beets whirl away in any blender easily.

4. Try a healthy addition

- Hemp hearts, chia seeds, ground flax, yogurt, cottage cheese, oatmeal, bran or protein powder are other great additions to enhance nutrition.

5. Blend & enjoy!

- Drink at home or place in a reusable coffee mug with a straw.

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Superpower Smoothie

Calling all kids (and parents/caregivers)! This groovy green smoothie tastes great and is packed with power! Blend this up for a superhero snack.

What you need:

- 2 cups frozen mango pieces
- 1 can 398 ml (14 oz) unsweetened pineapple including juice
- 1 cup unsweetened apple, mango or tropical juice
- 2 cups kale (wash and remove tough stems)

How you prepare:

Place all ingredients into a blender a blend until smooth. Serve immediately.

Makes 4 Servings. Per serving: Calories 155, Carbohydrates 38 g, Protein 1.6 g, Fat 0.5 g, Fiber 3.2 g

Andrea Holwegner, known as the Chocoholic Dietitian, is founder and president of Health Stand Nutrition Consulting Inc., a member of the Canadian Association of Professional Speakers and a media expert for the Dietitians of Canada. For nutrition counselling information and to sign up for a free monthly newsletter loaded with nutrition tips, recipes and more visit www.healthstandnutrition.com. Twitter @chocoholicRD.

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