

Smoothies 'are even healthier than thought'

Health advice on smoothies should be updated to show they contain two of the recommended "5-a-day" portions of fruit and vegetables, an expert has said.

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Government guidelines currently say smoothies contain one portion of fruit.

But smoothie recipes have at least one 80g portion of mashed fruit and a portion of juice, giving them two portions of the 5-a-day, according to an article published in the British Nutrition Foundation's journal Nutrition Bulletin.

Dietician Dr Carrie Ruxton, who wrote the article, said updating the advice would help more consumers reach their 5-a-day targets.

She wrote: "The steady growth of smoothies in the chilled juice market creates an opportunity to help more consumers achieve the 5-a-day target.

"This could be made easier if smoothies were designated as two portions of fruit, rather than being lumped together with juices as just one portion.

"Smoothies are significantly higher in fibre, vitamin C and antioxidants than juices and meet the criteria to make a labelling claim for fibre content. Smoothie recipes contain at least one 80g portion of mashed fruit plus a portion of juice, and are nutritionally equivalent to two portions of fruit."

She said the sugar content of smoothies was no greater than the fruit in its original form.

"In conclusion, the nutritional benefits offered by smoothies far outweigh any risks, and a re-evaluation of the 5-a-day criteria is justified," she concluded.

Professor Judith Buttriss, director general of the British Nutrition Foundation, said: "Dr Ruxton makes a valid point that the Government's advice may not sufficiently reflect the full nutritional benefits that all-fruit smoothies offer, particularly the dietary fibre provided.

"Smoothies, whether shop bought or homemade, provide a convenient way of consuming the vitamins, minerals and fibre of fruit."

Dr Shilpee Merhotra, a nutritionist for drinks manufacturer Innocent, said: "It makes sense to update the guidelines laid out before smoothies were widely available.

"We've had some very positive discussions with both the Food Standards Agency and Department of Health. Both recognise that certain foods, such as smoothies, could be reclassified as more than one portion of fruit and veg."



Dr Carrie Ruxton said the sugar content of smoothies was no greater than the fruit in its original form. Photo: ROGER TAYLOR