

No easy answer to whether orange or juice is better

By Maria Godoy, NPR

We all could probably eat more fruits and vegetables. But if forced to choose between whole fruit or a glass of juice, which one seems more healthful?

The general advice is to opt for the fruit, since juicing can destroy some of the beneficial compounds fruit contains and strip it of fiber – which most of us don't get enough of. And let's face it: Most juice contains a lot of sugar, which we might be trying to cut down on.

So our interest was piqued when we spotted a study suggesting that, when it comes to oranges, juice might actually unlock more carotenoids and flavonoids – both beneficial phytonutrients – than an equivalent amount of fruit.

To figure that out, German and Saudi researchers started with a big batch of fresh navel oranges. They analyzed the fruit in three forms: peeled segments, a mashed-up puree and as juice, both fresh-squeezed and pasteurized. They found that levels of vitamin C and carotenoids were basically the same in the juice and the unprocessed fruit, while levels of flavonoids were significantly lower.

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