Everything you wanted to know about

We can't get enough of those super-guick smoothies made by the new generation of blenders, but are they as healthy as we think? With the help of our panel of testers and GH nutritionist Anita Bean, the GHI sorts the truth from the spin



HOW HEALTHY ARE BULLET SMOOTHIES?

THE NUTRITIONIST'S VIEW

✓ The fruit is good for skin

Studies show people who eat more fruit and veg have a golden skin tone that looks healthy and attractive. One six-week study revealed that just two extra portions of fruit a day produced a visible improvement in skin tone.

✓ Blending is best

Juicing gives you a concentrated dose of vitamins and minerals, but blending provides a more complete mix of everything fruit and veg have to offer, including fibre. Fibre also helps slow the absorption of sugars, so smoothies won't raise your blood sugar quite as fast as fruit juice.

X Smoothies can make you eat more Research shows that liquid calories don't satisfy your

appetite as well as solid food. So if you consume calories as liquid rather than as food, you tend to consume more overall.

✓ They're suber convenient

Virtually no preparation is required - just blend, gulp and go. A smoothie also delivers several portions in one sitting, so it's easier to tick off your five-a-day.

X They contain a lot of sugar

Fruit smoothies are quite concentrated, so it's easy to take in a lot of fruit sugar in one sitting. Some can contain more sugar than a can of cola. 'Opt for recipes that contain veg to increase the satiating fibre content. A good ratio to follow is 70% veg to 30% fruit,' says Anita.

SMOOTHIES VS WHOLE FRUIT

We know bullet blenders break food down more than chewing would, but there are no studies to show if the body actually absorbs more nutrients from smoothies.

THE GH SMOOTHIF CHALLENGE

Could power-blended smoothies work magic on our testers' skin and energy levels in just one month?

We asked four female volunteers to use a bullet blender to make and consume at least one freshly made smoothie a day for 28 days, without other changes to their diet or skincare. All four guinea pigs were healthy but generally struggled to eat their five-a-day. Before the trial, each had her skin assessed in the GHI beauty lab with a VISIA Complexion Analyser. This measures everything from spots to wrinkle severity. Afterwards, the volunteers filled in a health and diet questionnaire and had their skin re-analysed.

Did it make a difference?

- All four women ate more than the five-a-day target. One hit a high of 12 fruit and veg in a day.
- None lost or gained weight.
- Surprisingly, none noticed any difference to their energy levels.
- They did notice an improvement in the appearance of their skin! Some said their face felt less puffy. The GHI Beauty lab tests revealed an average 14% drop in the number of spots, up to 36% reduction in wrinkle size and severity and up to 8% shrinkage in the intensity of brown spots. One tester's skin smoothness improved by 33%.



VERDICT

'A smoothie a day is a super-convenient way to pack more fruit and veg into vour diet. Our skin tests show they can also improve the appearance and quality of your skin. But the jury is still out as to whether drinking your fruit and veg is any better for your health and complexion than eating them in their whole form. However, if you're someone who struggles to hit their five-a-day, a smoothie is one of the easiest ways to boost your diet. If you've resolved to eat in a better, more balanced way in 2016, then getting yourself a power blender is certainly a good place to start.'





89/100

WINNER

and nuts.

Nutri Ninja Auto IO

£119.99: CURRYS.CO.UK

1 A wide range of settings,

including a pulse and a

high-power option for

blitzing ice, frozen fruit

2 Made perfectly blended

smoothies in seconds, no

matter what ingredients

3 Comes with a cup that

we used - even ice!

has a sealable lid

4 Very easy to clean

5 Very loud to use!

RUNNER UP

Nutribullet Graphite £67.99; LAKELAND.CO.UK

- 1 Sleek, compact blender.
- 2 A powerful motor means
- smoothies are ready in
- seconds and it performed
- well in all our tests, apart from when it came to
- pulverising raspberry seeds.
- 3 Simple to use, but only has one setting.
- 4 Comes with a large and small cup with sealable lids.



* For full smoothie maker test results, visit goodhousekeeping.co.uk



Here's one of GH's favourite smoothies to start your day.

- 200g (7fl oz) semi-skimmed milk 200g (7oz) natural yogurt
- 125g (40z) mixed frozen berries - we used blackberries, blueberries and blackcurrants
- 15g (½oz) rolled oats
- 2 tsp runny honey

Put all the ingredients into a blender and whiz until smooth. Pour into two tall glasses and serve.



GOOD ADVICE

Good Housekeening

Kitchen whizzes

latest must-have gadget - sales rose by 72% in the first six months of 2015. John Lewis

was rumoured to be selling a Nutribullet every 30 seconds and the Duchess of

Cambridge is believed to use hers daily.

HOW WE TESTED: We blended fruit and

veg, made mayonnaise, pulverised nuts and

ice, made breadcrumbs and batter to assess

performance, ease of use and noise levels!

We tested five to find the best.

A high-powered smoothie maker is the