

Ask Leyla: Why are vegetable smoothies causing my husband's stomach discomfort?

Q: My husband and I are 69 and 71 years of age. For the past several months, I have been making us vegetable smoothies consisting of broccoli or kale, carrots, beets and celery along with a small amount of V-8 juice. I give my husband a 16 ounce serving in a glass and I consume nearly double that amount.

About 2-3 hours later, my husband gets either a stomach ache or diarrhea. It does seem to help if he drinks it over a couple of hours, but I can't understand why I don't have any problems and he does.



A: Looks like a reasonably healthy smoothie recipe but 16 oz. is a hefty portion—not to mention your quart-size serving! Most likely, it's that large immediate influx of fiber and sugar (from the carrots and beets) that's drawing too much water to the colon and causing diarrhea in your husband. Try smaller portions like 4-6 ounces.

I have a rule about smoothies: Never drink more than you would eat. In other words, you wouldn't eat a big bag of kale, carrots and beets from your individual salad plate, would you? With that much produce, you'd have to eat it off a tray! You shouldn't drink as much either. Blend only the portion that you could otherwise eat, not more.

Another reason to watch your portions is to avoid consuming too many goitrogens and oxalates. For example, using an entire head of broccoli, kale or other Brassica vegetables in your smoothie every day can eventually depress thyroid function. Alternatively, using a big bag of spinach every day in your smoothie may result in kidney stone formation from too much oxalate.

You see, more isn't necessarily better. Eating your vegetables instead of predigesting them in the juicer will ensure you don't overdo it.

To your health!