

Beware of the Fruits-Only Diet

Did you know that an all-fruit diet can lead to brittle hair, low blood pressure, even pancreatitis?

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In a week, can a diet of 30 apples, 40 bananas, and 15 green smoothies really work for your body? If you ask Ashton Kutcher at the moment, the answer would be a resounding "NO"! The actor, who plays the maverick Apple founder Steve Jobs in a biopic, had to be hospitalised after following a fruits-only diet. Steve Jobs followed a fruit-only diet.

To get under the skin of the character, Kutcher followed the fruitarian diet like Jobs did. The result was intense stomach pain followed by hospitalisation, and a diagnosis of pancreatitis. Latest studies suggest that a fruits-only diet almost never works in the long run and plays havoc with the body.

In fact, according to alternative medicine advocate and supporter of rawism and fasting, Herbert Shelton, there were a few serious problems with people who attempted a fruitarian diet (even on high-quality seasonal fruits). He wrote in *Hygiene Review*, "Bad nails, gingivitis, dental caries, dry skin, brittle hair, lowered red blood cell count and low haemoglobin, were the problems that people following this diet faced. Many of them displayed serious signs of neurological disorders, emotional upsets and extreme nervousness. Another cardinal lack that occurs quite often is a distinct lack of vitamin B 12."

If you thought you could attempt a fruits-only diet for a few weeks to crash diet, dropping the idea immediately would be wise. Dietician Ishi Khosla warns, "It would be dangerous to go on a complete fruitarian diet. You can follow it for one or two days a week. Just having fruits is not a complete diet. They have high sugar content and aren't good for diabetics. They also have a diuretic effect and can cause low sodium and low blood pressure, which can lead to fainting. Everyone needs a balanced diet and proteins for energy, or else it can really lead to fatigue."

It's not just glamouristas who are fond of this diet. Even Mahatma Gandhi became a fruitarian for six months in the early 1900s, before reverting to a vegetarian diet. Fruitarian Nisha Khanna, 28, from Bangalore, says, "I drink mango and banana smoothies for breakfast. My body is completely detoxed. I do it for four days every week. But I do experience weakness and hairfall along with complete exhaustion." Raw food diet expert Dr Soorya Kaur from New Delhi, says, "I think you can go on a fruitarian diet a few days of a week or a few days in a month. But take professional

advice. An only-fruits-diet isn't good, even if it's the fad. You need vegetables and other things to sustain the body."

Beyonce followed a maple syrup and fruit diet to lose weight for her role in *Dreamgirls*. But she told her fans never to try it, even as a desperate measure.

According to a research, there are many risks associated with a fruitarian diet. A person whose diet constitutes 75 per cent fruits is likely to have more health issues than a person on a diet comprising with 50 per cent fruits. Diabetics can face serious risks since fruits have high sugar content. There are also the risks of serious nutritional deficiencies, including vitamin B 12, calcium, iron and zinc.

Blogger Claude Vigneault, went on a fruitarian diet for six months. She says, "A fruits-only diet spoiled my teeth. It was a challenge to keep eating fruits for months. I also experienced an occasional upset stomach and light headaches." Says weight loss expert Dr Shobha Kaul, "There's disconnect between how we were designed to live and the way we are living now. But the answer to losing weight cannot be a fruits-only diet. It can have a serious impact on energy levels and also the mind. A balanced diet is better than going on a fruits-only diet any day." Adds Dr Kaur, "Juice is better than fruits. It cleanses and allows you to draw the maximum nutrition from fruits, even vegetables, while reducing the energy required for digestion. Juices help in releasing the physical and emotional toxins accumulated in our bodies from the stress of modern living."

Know your fruits

Acid fruits: Citrus, pineapples, strawberries, pomegranates, kiwi, cranberries, and sour apples.

Sub-acid fruits: Sweet apples, sweet cherries, raspberries, blackberries, blueberries, peaches, pears, papayas, figs, apricots, and mangoes.

Sweet fruits: Bananas, grapes, melons, and persimmons.

Nuts: Pecans, almonds, Brazil nuts, cashews, walnuts, macadamias, pistachios, pine nuts, hazelnuts, beechnuts, and hickory.

Seeds: Sunflower, sesame, squash and pumpkin.

Dried fruits: Dates, figs, apricots, apples, raisins, cherries, prunes, bananas and cranberries.

Oily fruits: Avocados, coconuts, and olives.