



DO YOU REALLY NEED THIS?

# Wellness Shots

Can a two-ounce bottle packed with micronutrients really superboost your health? **by ASHLEY MATEO**

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**HEN WHEATGRASS** shots showed up at smoothie stands and natural-food stores, only the most devoted health nuts drank them.

Now everyone is throwing back so-called wellness shots, formulated to improve digestion, mental focus, immunity, and more. They're at juice shops, supermarkets, and airport kiosks. At \$3 or more a pop, are they worth it? Experts are skeptical.

The good news: Many shots use real

food. "The ingredients are vegetables, fruits, roots, and herbs," says Alka Gupta, M.D., co-director of integrative health at New York-Presbyterian. Things like ginger and turmeric root, beets and mushrooms have proven health benefits, such as regulating blood sugar and curbing inflammation.

And the appeal is obvious: A 1.5- to four-ounce swig to better health. But that's the problem. "The amount is probably too little to make a difference," says Kristine Gedroic, M.D., author of *A Nation of Unwell*.

"There's no hard scientific research that shows consuming ingredients in shot form is beneficial." For most, a glug won't help them hit their daily nutrient quotas.

That's why—surprise—experts recommend produce and herbs over a sippable. For the time-strapped, even a smoothie is a better option, since the body digests and absorbs nutrients better from whole foods, not elixirs, Gupta says. Plus, the fiber contained helps you feel satiated.

If your diet is void of fresh vegetables and herbs, and a shot is the only option, fine. "Remember, they won't undo poor choices," Gedroic says. And like all supplements, these are unregulated. Shelf-stable or powdered ones may contain preservatives or chemicals, Gupta says. And avoid those containing "proprietary ingredients," since you don't know exactly what's in them.

Finally, look out for sugar. "Fruit juices or sweeteners, like agave, can add six or seven grams of sugar in a small shot," Gupta says. You're better off eating a piece of fruit—per usual. ■