

# Do You Really Need to Detox?

Ok you know you should and it sounds like it would be a good idea, but from what you've heard from others the process itself just isn't worth the effort right? Well yes you should and after the effort your body and mind will ask you why you waited so long! We're going to explain to you the importance of detoxifying your body and balancing your soul. Trust us you will feel fantastic afterwards!

## Everybody needs to cleanse

Just like a car needs a good service to run smoothly, your mind and body will benefit from a good clean-out 3 or 4 times per year. Most people tend to eat plenty of sugar, dairy, meat and high-fat foods and operate in high stress environments on a day-to-day basis (like driving your car through peak hour traffic). Added to this is moving in environments that are full of pollutants and hidden chemicals (like your seemingly innocent bathroom) – all reasons for cleansing!

Nature has a way of telling you when your internal organs need cleansing and rebuilding. Symptoms can be as subtle as feeling constantly tired and low on energy, or feeling emotionally overwhelmed and irritated at the simplest things. For example, it's not normal to be dependant on headache tablets to get you through your day – if you use any form of painkiller (drugs or alcohol) then this is a very clear signal to give yourself the gift of a detox. If you continue to overload your systems with all sorts of toxic food and drugs then your body will suffer immensely for it. You are designed to be a physically and emotionally strong, healthy and vital being. So tune in to your recurring signals and patterns in your body and use these as an indicator for when it's time for you to cleanse.



## What does a real detox involve?

A detox is a process involving the digestive system and the liver together - this is very important, as you cannot fully detox by only doing a liver detox. When you do this you can actually set yourself up for more harm than health. Think of it this way, if the liver is pumping toxins into an under functioning bowel, then it will all get reabsorbed back into your blood stream at very high toxic levels! A complete detox will rid your body of a build up of toxins in order to keep your systems clean, vital and strong to protect you from developing diseases.

Continually putting bad quality fuel into your system and not detoxing will lead to the destruction of beneficial bacteria that line your intestinal walls, which help you to digest your foods. Foods will stagnate and putrefy in your gut, pockets of faecal matter will line your colon walls and your abdominal muscles will lose their ability to push. Constipation, loose stools, unpleasant gas and body odours become the norm!

## How do you know you need to detox?

The following symptoms are good reason to consult your Naturopath for a detox:

- Recurrent headaches
- Muscle aching and weakness
- Tingling, pricking, or numbness of the skin and nerve pain
- Recurrent infections
- Infertility, PMT symptoms
- Adverse reactions/sensitivity to environmental chemicals, odours and/or nutritional supplements
- Chronic fatigue and lethargy
- Depression, anxiety and/or mood swings
- Anaemia

These diseases can all benefit greatly from a detox:

- Autoimmune disease
- Allergies and Asthma
- Fibromyalgia-a widespread musculoskeletal of pain, fatigue and tenderness in localised areas.
- Inflammatory Bowel diseases
- Diabetes and thyroid disease
- Reproductive disorders
- Parkinson's Disease, Alzheimer's, Multiple sclerosis and Cerebral palsy
- Many types of cancers
- Chronic fatigue syndrome
- Multiple chemical sensitivities
- Atherosclerosis - a chronic inflammatory response in the walls of arteries,
- \* Autism

## Meet the toxins

Every year 700,000 tons of chemicals and toxins are released into your environment! You absorb these toxins via your mouth (via food and drink), your skin and even through the air you breathe! There's just no getting away from them in 2009. Toxins come in an array of sheep's clothing and are tightly woven into your lifestyle choices. Smoking, drinking alcohol, a poor diet, artificial sweeteners and high amounts of sugar all contribute to a toxic overload. You would be very surprised at the large amount of sugar the average person eats without even knowing it! Read your labels!

Now let us tell you what happens when you take the very common pharmaceutical drugs, being antibiotics and the oral contraceptive pill...these drugs directly affect your good gut bacteria and allow the bad bacteria to proliferate, YUCK! When these organisms die off the cellular debris from the die-off is absorbed into your blood stream, which can cause a serious inflammatory immune response.

Did you know that your body is naturally designed to detoxify, but your current environment can be way too much of an overload on your detoxifying pathways! The human body has yet to evolve to the toxic creations of mankind, BUT nature has provided you with the tools to assist the process.

## What happens during a detox?

There are 2 phases your liver undergoes to detox a toxin. These are suitably called phase 1 and phase 2. For each phase there are different nutrients and herbs needed to make the process successful. The overall goal of liver detoxification is to take substances that are general lipid soluble and toxic, and make them more soluble and non-toxic through a series of chemical reactions.

Phase 1 involves the liver breaking down the toxins allowing them to bond with phase 2 substances, which then transports the toxins out of your body. This entire process involves enzymes, vital nutrients and amino acids (from protein). If Phase 1 happens but Phase 2 lacks the nutrients needed to complete Phase 2, you will be left with reactive substances that can lead to inflammation and tissue damage. This process will then set you up for more serious disease processes!

Just a note on a fasting detox: to clarify when you do for instance, a lemon, honey and cayenne fast, it's not per se a detox. It's a wonderful way to take it easy on your digestive system by allowing it to take a break from digesting foods and allows for some cleansing to be done. It doesn't however detox your liver or bowels at a therapeutic level. It maybe important to note that in order for phase 2 to be complete you need amino acids, which come from proteins, so foods such as fish, tofu, quinoa and chicken are important to incorporate into your detox diet.

So overall, to properly detox you need to do it right so it's best to seek help from a naturopath.

## Options for detoxing – start simply

There are lots of ways to detox but it doesn't always have to be a big deal to be life changing. While deep cleanses can take months to clean out at a cellular level, even sitting down to a weekend of eating brown rice (yes, only brown rice, well-chewed) can effect some positive change.

- \* For 3-7 days, take a break from fats, salts, sugars, spices and protein (fish is ok). Think lots of green vegetables and clean tasting foods that are not fried. Eat soups, cooked whole grains (no bread or cereal), steamed, boiled and raw vegetables, spring water or herbal teas.
- \* Chew everything really well. Eat in elegant sufficiency, no more.
- \* Have 3 regular meals per day and eat no later than 7pm at night to give your digestive system a rest.
- \* Snack on in-season fruits and veges with the occasional fresh juice.
- \* Exercise daily - take a walk before and after meals to stimulate circulation and encourage discharge of toxins.
- \* To renew your intestinal flora, eat small amounts of miso or tamari in soups.
- \* Take time to relax and just be. Your body is discharging and detoxing, lightening up and letting go of old stuff that is no longer useful for you. Help it out by being gentle on yourself...have a bath, listen to your favourite music or simply spend some nurturing time with a supportive friend.
- \* Be quiet – something rather foreign to many of us in this busy world of ours.

For a more intense detox, especially useful with chronic diseases or ongoing health problems, make sure you do it properly with a naturopath.

### The Basics

- \* Choose food that feels right
- \* Be aware of what makes you light in diet – fresh vegetables, legumes and beans correctly prepared (thoroughly cooked to avoid gastric upsets such as flatulence and bloating), wholesome grains.
- \* Make it an obsession to chew well. (If you can't chew the food that you're eating it's probably not very good for you...unless it's soup!)

Note: If you are suffering from a health condition it is important you seek advice from a health care professional, such as a Naturopath, before commencing on a detox.

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