

THE HOW AND WHY OF DETOX

Detox has moved from health trend to health “must have” for many people. Could internal cleansing be right for you?

What Is Detox?

Toxins from the air, artificial food colors/flavors, chemical exposure and more bombard our bodies every day. Even normal metabolism releases toxins in our bodies. The body naturally rids itself of some toxins, but it can get overloaded, causing a variety of symptoms like headaches, constipation, hormonal imbalances, skin issues and stubborn excess weight (1). A detox provides the body with a natural and gentle way to neutralize and eliminate toxins from the body through the kidneys, intestines, lungs, lymph nodes and skin (2). When removing toxins, a proper detox regimen feeds the body healthy nutrients that help replenish its stores for optimum health.

How Does it Work?

To start a detox, first reduce your toxin exposure from items such as cigarettes, alcohol, caffeine, refined sugars and saturated fats (2). Also, consider limiting exposure to chemical or non-natural household cleaners, shampoos, toothpastes and deodorants. Use natural alternatives instead.

Stress also contributes to your body's toxin levels since stress causes the body to release hormones into the system. In large amounts on a regular basis, stress hormones can produce toxins and gradually harm the body over time. Yoga and meditation can be effective ways to relieve the stress (2).

There are many detox diets and programs to choose from, and it can be a little difficult to decide which one to try. When choosing a detox diet you should consider your individual needs. A doctor's recommendation would be helpful before you decide to start a detox program. Some common detox programs include: fruit and veggie detox, smoothie cleanse, juice cleanse, sugar detox and hypoallergenic detox (2). No matter which regimen you choose, keep hydrated, get vital nutrients and talk to your healthcare provider before trying it out.

An important part of many detox regimens is the use of natural supplements. In addition to taking a multivitamin and an omega, here are some of the many supplements that can play a helpful role in cleansing and detoxifying your body:

Psyllium husk is known for its colon-cleansing effects and restoring healthy digestive function. This supplement is a bulking fiber. When ingested, it forms a gelatin-like mass that expands in the colon from a collection of water. Then, psyllium husk can help transport waste through the intestinal tract.

Organic sulfur, also known as methylsulfonylmethane or **MSM**, is a powerful nutrient that helps the liver operate at its fullest detoxification capacity. It can be useful in supporting cellular health, cellular respiration and systemic detoxification.

Milk thistle supports liver health and may help the organ more efficiently remove toxins.

Cascara sagrada or sacred bark is a colon-cleansing herb that is suited for short-term use. This supplement helps constipation and helps muscles strengthen in the intestinal tract. This can help eliminate waste and toxins.

Wild burdock root helps eliminate toxins that are difficult to reach like residues from chemical herbicides and pesticides (3).

Dandelion root, a natural diuretic, helps detoxify and supports healthy liver function. It also is said to support the flow of bile, as is artichoke extract.

Many diets take place over a short period of time and should never be done by those who are pregnant, taking diuretics, diabetic or have other health issues without the consent of a doctor.

What Are the Benefits?

In the process of refreshing your system, a detox program can help refuel the body by adding healthy nutrients; support healthy circulation; eliminate toxins through skin, intestines and kidneys; stimulate the liver to push out toxins from the body; and rest the organs through fasting (2).

After a detox, many people find themselves with more energy, clearer skin, regular bowel movements, improved digestion and increased concentration and clarity. But like any supplement regimen or diet, detox will not cure, prevent or treat any illness. **WF**

References

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2. D. Smith, “10 Ways to Detoxify Your Body,” <http://life.gaiam.com/article/10-ways-detoxify-your-body>, accessed Sept. 29, 2014.
3. J. Benson, “Use these Five Natural Supplements to Detox Your Body of Toxic GMO Foods,” www.naturalnews.com/041664_gmos_detoxification_dietary_fiber.html, accessed Sept. 29, 2014.

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