

LIVER DETOXIFICATION GUIDELINES

WHAT IS DETOXIFICATION?

Detoxification is the process of either clearing toxins from the body or neutralizing or transforming them. Functionally, poor digestion, colon sluggishness and dysfunction, reduced liver function, and poor elimination through the kidneys, respiratory tract, and skin all increase toxicity. A detoxification is a process which occurs naturally in our bodies – but due to the number of toxins and chemicals in our food, water, air and through processing/metabolism, these toxins build up over time. Detoxification involves dietary and lifestyle changes that reduce the intake of toxins while improving elimination.

WHAT ARE TOXINS?

Toxins can be either external (environmental such as alcohol, pesticides, tobacco, heavy metal, medication, oral contraceptives) or internal (the body through its normal metabolism forms by-products which are toxic if not neutralized or excreted).

BENEFITS TO LIVER DETOXIFICATION

The liver is one of the most important detoxifying organs in our bodies. It breaks down, neutralizes, detoxifies, and removes chemicals, poisons, body wastes, bacteria, and unused/undigested food surpluses from our bodies. A poorly functioning liver can lead to toxin overload and contribute to ill health and chronic diseases. The liver uses a 2-step detoxification sequence to neutralize and remove toxins from our bodies, so we need to ensure that both phases are functioning optimally.

COMPONENTS OF DETOXIFICATION

- A detoxification can last from 1 week to 2 months depending on your health goals. As is true for all naturopathic protocols, an individualized approach is recommended. There are five components to detoxification:

1. Diet modifications
2. Supplements
3. Lifestyle
4. Mental/emotional
5. Spiritual/Energetics

1. DIET MODIFICATIONS

General Instructions:

- A whole foods, hypo-allergenic diet - to avoid any common, suspected and known food allergens.
- Drink 2-3 litres of water daily - for maintaining the body's basic physiological functions and for the detoxification process itself. Elimination of toxins is mediated by continuously voiding and replenishing body fluids. Water should not be consumed with meals as it may interfere with digestive enzyme functioning. Add half a lemon/lime to your water for detox of liver.
- Eat when you feel hungry - use your intuition to feel what your body needs. You can choose to have 3 main meals, lunch being the largest meal, breakfast and dinner being smaller meals. And avoid eating late at night. And learn to let the body feel hunger between meals - avoid snacking all day unless you feel your body needs the energy.

Liver Cleansing Foods:

- Phase I detoxification support - cabbage, broccoli, brussel sprouts, oranges, tangerines
- Phase II detoxification support - cabbage, broccoli, brussel sprouts, legumes, turmeric, green tea, raspberries, blueberries
- Liver protectors - garlic, green vegetables, apples, beets, turmeric, seeds, almonds, whole grains

2. SUPPLEMENTS

With all supplements, an individualized approach is recommended. The type, amount and durations will be specific based on your needs.

- Nutritional supplements for the liver -Omega 3 oil from Chia seed oil, Hemp seed oil, Algae oil, or Fish oil; Multi B vitamin Supplement or from Spirulina and/or Nutritional Yeast (high in B vitamins);

Probiotics (fermented foods or supplement); Other: N-acetyl cysteine, Alpha-lipoic acid, Calcium D-glucarate, L-Methionine, MSM

- Herbs specific for liver health – Milk Thistle tea and Dandelion tea 2x/day, Fennel seed tea and peppermint tea as needed to support digestion. Other liver herbs: Artichoke, Moringa, Turmeric, Burdock, Holy Basil, Schizandra.

3. LIFESTYLE

The way you live your life plays an enormous role in liver function and overall health. Plenty of fresh air is needed to support cleansing and oxygenation of the cells and tissues, while limited exposure to sunshine is needed to revitalize our body.

- Exercise - very important to support the cleansing process. It helps to relax the body, clears wastes, and prevents toxicity symptoms. Any non-stressful activity that you enjoy will help you rest, recuperate and encourage your body's detoxification.
- Contrast Showers - alternating hot and cold showers provide cleansing, increases circulation and is a simple, effective way of improving metabolism. Start with three minutes of hot water (or as warm as you can tolerate) followed by less than one minute of cold water (or as cool as you can tolerate). Repeat pattern at least once, and always finish with cold.
- Dry skin brushing - with a soft brush or loofah prior to bathing, start at the feet and hands, working your way up, and always stroking towards the heart. This can be done every day, year round. This helps to clear toxins from the skin (the largest detoxifying organ of the body!).
- Castor oil pack – over the liver. Castor oil has been shown to draw out toxins and improve elimination.
- Rest - an important component of allowing body to detoxify and heal. Ensure at least 8 hours of sleep per night. Take naps if you can – listen to your body.

4. MENTAL/EMOTIONAL

- Work and be creative - staying busy helps break our ties to food. While detoxing, most people experience greater work energy and more creativity and, naturally find lots to do.
- Clean up both our body and our environment - our room, desk, office, closet, and home. If we want to prepare for the new, we need to clear out the old.
- Surround yourself with supportive people and/or take some alone time to reflect and be still - remember to listen to your inner guidance and to be aware of any blockages and emotional toxins to heal and release.
- Practice forgiveness and compassion for yourself and others.
- Journaling - allow yourself time at some point in the day to write down your feelings and thoughts, positive or negative, and reflect on the day and what you are learning about yourself.

5. SPIRITUAL

- Meditation and relaxation - are other important aspects of cleansing which help clear stresses and bring us into contact with ourselves, and our truth.
- Spiritual practice and prayer - will affirm our positive attitude and support our meditation and relaxation, providing us with inner fuel to live with purpose and passion.

OTHER ASPECTS OF CLEANSING...

Although cleansing is not an easy process to stick with, most people feel better as their cleanse progresses – more vital, lighter, less blocked, more flexible, clearer, and more spiritually attuned. There are so many benefits to cleansing your body and mind.

“Healing Reactions”

Please be aware that people experience different reactions to detoxification and cleansing depending on how much your body needs to eliminate. Some common symptoms include fatigue, nausea, headaches, constipation or diarrhea, sweating, irritability, mood swings, insomnia, runny nose, inability to concentrate. These and others are normal reactions and can be lessened with increased water intake, exercise and resting when needed. Try to start your cleansing process when you have a day or two off from work since the first day or two are the most difficult. However, these symptoms will subside and the benefits will be worth it!