

Smart & Safe

DIETARY & CLEANSING Methods



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Introduction

Cleansing or detox diets are not new; they've been around for more than five thousand years, according to the American Dietetics Association (ADA). They used to be an annual ritual bodily and spiritual cleansing – a cleansing of the body and the soul. Examples of cleansing diets include juice fasting; mono dieting, which advocates the consumption of one food, like grapefruit or grapes; and raw food diets.

Detox Versus Cleanse

A detox typically describes some process that will rid your body of toxins that have supposedly built up in your system.

A cleanse can be seen as a spring cleaning for your body, where focus is placed on eating clean, with whole nutrient rich foods and eliminating processed and junk food that in turn supports the body's natural detoxification processes.



What Are Toxins

Typically, detox diets are marketed under the guise of flushing out toxins. Toxins can range in definition depending on whom you talk to. Many people believe that toxins are abundant in processed foods in the form of preservatives, and in our natural environment. Cleanses offer you a way to rid yourself of these toxins. Unfortunately, toxins aren't usually found trapped in your digestive tract.

Toxins can be present in the food you take in, the water you drink, and the air you breathe. For detox diets and cleanses that advocate eating only raw organic fruits and vegetables, it's

important to know that even these are not safe from toxins. Frequently organic produce is tainted with toxins like E. coli and salmonella.

The first thing to be mindful of with cleansing – or detox diets – is that scientists cannot agree on whether detoxification or “cleansing diets” are even beneficial for your health.

The British Dietetics Association is unequivocal. According to the BDA, the whole idea of a detox idea is “nonsense.” Your body, it says, has its own well-developed system of getting rid of toxins, it argues.

Moreover, any benefits that people associate with detoxes can be attained through any healthy, sensible lifestyle that cuts out smoking, reduces the amount of alcohol consumed, and promotes a healthy diet, exercise, fresh air, and sleep.

Pitfalls Of Extreme Detox and Cleanse Programs

Slower Metabolism

Very extreme cleanses, such as those that include fasting with only lemon water for two weeks and also those that drastically cut calories are certainly drastic and will slow metabolism. Starvation sends the body in to survival mode, where it hoards every bit of energy, so it burns little fat during fasting and so typically, what is lost is water, and muscle and losing lean muscle mass makes matters worse as muscle burns fat.

Nutrient Deficiencies

Drastic food restriction as is often seen in cleanses results in nutrient deficiencies, including key vitamins, minerals, protein, carbohydrates, and healthy fats that the body needs to function properly.



Drastic Measures – Drastic Side-Effects

WebMD says, many detox programs *“involve fasting, or just drinking liquids. Others allow some foods, like fruits and vegetables. They typically are short diets -- they're not a way of eating you can stick with in the long run.”*

Hunger and weakness are common on these plans, and potential side effects include

- Lack of energy
- Low blood sugar
- Fatigue and lethargy
- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Lightheadedness

Useless And Maybe Harmful

The Chicago Tribune reports that in general, medical professionals are not convinced as to the effectiveness of extreme detox programs and that *"clinical studies haven't shown that toxins are removed as a result of a cleanse. And if you severely restrict your calories, after two or three days your body starts breaking down its own cells and muscle."*

Your Body Detoxifies Itself

The body is well equipped to rid toxins, the liver and kidneys are your body's own toxin regulation system. Many detoxes and cleanses that claim to rid the liver of harmful chemicals and toxins may contain damaging diuretics or other substances.

The liver will break down toxins into water-soluble chemicals that can sweat out of the body. The kidneys filter other harmful chemicals. Berkeley Wellness also points out that your skin does a wonderful job of protecting you from most toxins that you would absorb.

The Body's Natural Detoxification Process

According to the Academy Of Nutrition and Dietetics, *“Detoxification is a process that the body performs around the clock utilizing important nutrients from the diet. It's the process that transforms molecules that need to be removed from the body, or "toxins." They fall into two main categories: molecules that are made in the body as byproducts of regular metabolism (endotoxins), and those that come from outside the body and are introduced to the system by eating, drinking, breathing or are absorbed through the skin (exotoxins). Endotoxins include compounds such as lactic acid, urea and waste products from microbes in the gut. Exotoxins include environmental toxins and pollutants, pesticides, mercury in seafood, lead from car exhaust and air pollution, chemicals in tobacco smoke, dioxin in feminine care products, phthalates from plastic and parabens from lotions and cosmetics.”*

Unless you fall into a radioactive swamp, your very smart and efficient body, specifically the kidneys and liver can deal with and flush out toxins that you come across on a daily basis. The truth is the human body has been efficiently performing detoxification processes since man came to be, and long before the influx of the detox/cleanse market.

However, the modern lifestyle is bombarded with environmental toxins, fast greasy food, chemical laden food made in factories and poor dietary habits. Too many people lead an unhealthy lifestyle where poor diet, a lack of hydration and other bad habits can inhibit the body's natural detoxification processes.

The truth is that nature never intended a daily influx of Twinkies™, candy, Fresh fries and soda to be part of the nutrient equation, and so the body is not well equipped to handle such loads.

Like a clogged drain, poor diet choices, excess liquor, lack of exercise, and other unhealthy habits place undue pressure on the liver and kidneys.

Safe, Natural And Effective Detox And Cleanse Methods

We know that the body has a natural detox system that uses both the kidneys and liver to rid your body of toxins. What should you do if you want to help your body and make eliminating toxins easier? Most detox diets encourage starvation or diuretics. These can be unsafe and can cause things like electrolyte imbalances.



You don't have to take drastic measures and risk your health in order to cleanse and detox your system. If you'd like to help your body detox here are some important steps you can take. Remember, before starting any new diet or exercise regimen it is important to consult your physician.

Clean Diet

A clean diet is your best detox plan. Nutritious whole foods provide your body with what it needs and eliminating processed foods with artificial colors and flavors, fast food, fried food, alcohol, sugar and white flour helps heal the body and supports its natural detox processes.



In an interview with Elle magazine, Dr. Woodson Merrell, MD, chairman of the department of integrative medicine at Manhattan's Beth Israel Medical Center says, *"We detoxify by eating nutritious whole foods and by avoiding those laden with pesticides, preservatives, excess sugar, or saturated fats."* *"Detox is not some condition of metabolic grace attained via extreme penance; it's a process that unfolds in our cells every second of our lives, most obviously in the liver."*

Kathleen M. Zelman, MPH, RD, LD reports through WebMd that *"If the idea of detoxing appeals, you might try "clean" eating that focuses on vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and lean protein -- basically, whole foods without a lot of processing. That's good for you and more likely to give you results that last, especially if you make exercise a habit."*

Hydrate

A good detox starts with drinking water. It's important to stay hydrated so your kidneys have plenty of water to process out toxins. Hydration also supports healthy bowel movements and digestion. The more water you drink the faster your kidneys can expel toxins. If you're urinating every hour you know that you're hydrated enough to gently cleanse your kidneys.



Electrolytes

Electrolytes are minerals and salts that are responsible for many cellular processes. The primary electrolytes are sodium, potassium, calcium, and magnesium and these nutrients provide hydration for the body that in turn supports natural detoxification processes. If you're not consuming a varied and balanced diet, you may develop one of the many electrolyte disorders.

Drink Your Lemons

Lemon water or lemon tea is a primary ingredient featured in many detox diets. One reason for this is the high amount of nutrients that fresh lemon juice contains. One cup of fresh lemon juice has 9% of daily potassium, 8% of daily folate, 4% of daily magnesium, and 4% of fiber.



Lemon juice also gives you 187% of your daily vitamin C, a key antioxidant that fights free radicals and promotes healthy immunity. Since

lemons are full of antioxidants, you may notice an increase in your skin clarity and a boost to your mood and energy.

Drinking warm water with fresh lemon juice upon waking provides key hydrating electrolytes, (more important upon waking since the body becomes dehydrated during sleep) and lemon juice promotes the production of key enzymes in the liver that assist in healthy digestion and supports the liver in purging toxins.

Along with containing vital nutrients, the acids in lemon juice allow your body to digest good food more slowly.

According to Dr. Axe, the drawn-out absorption rate of food means you will have fewer insulin spikes during the day. This will help regulate your hormones and can lead to a steadier supply of energy.

Lemon is also a natural diuretic, which will help you flush any excess water that you have taken in when attempting to hydrate.

Drink Dandelion Tea

Dandelion is an herb that boosts liver function, which is the main organ that eliminates toxins from the body.



Exercise

Exercise improves blood circulation in the blood and lymph system and digestion and it also makes you sweat, which helps purge toxins. It also reduces stress that supports all the body's internal processes.

Eliminate Junk Food

Prevent intake of chemicals by avoiding factory made foods, junk food, artificial colors, flavors, and dietary junk like bad fats and sugars.

Get Good Sleep

The body and the liver perform natural detoxification processes during sleep. If you have trouble falling and staying asleep, speak with your doctor. There are many natural remedies for insomnia and stress can be at the root of the problem.

Dry Brush Your Skin

Promotes lymph flow, improves blood circulation, exfoliates and removes dead skin cells and cleans pores.

Go Organic

Eating organic produce eliminates the intake of pesticide toxins left on fruits and vegetables grown with conventional farming methods.



Cut Out Sugar

"Start by decreasing the amount of sugar you consume," says Matt Dower, spa director at Mirbeau Inn & Spa in Skaneateles, NY and that includes honey, molasses, and artificial sweeteners.

"If you eat more sugar, you ask your body for more insulin, straining your pancreas and wearing yourself out," he says. *"In the long term, this kind of habit can cause you to become chronically fatigued, diabetic, develop cancer, and pack on excess weight."*

Drink Lots Of Tea

"Not only is tea full of antioxidants, it hydrates you (especially if it's herbal) and fills you up," says Ashley Karr, a research psychologist and wellness coach. "This means you will be less likely to overeat or eat the wrong things!" Keep in mind, the caffeine in tea is different than the caffeine in coffee—it's gentler on your system. It'll also give you a pick-me-up minus the jitters.

The Neti Pot

Don't forget that pollution and allergens are all around you. They're in the air and can trigger allergy symptoms (such as yucky, puffy, red eyes). Dr. Travis Stork, host of daytime talk show *The Doctors* advises you flush your nasal passages regularly with a Neti Pot. Doing so can eliminate the side effects of air pollutants and lead to better breathing naturally. If you use the Neti Pot before bed, it's even better as it will enhance your sleep.

Sweat

Exercise, a sauna, or a steam filled bathroom retreat helps you sweat toxins from your body.

Forbes Riley, creator of fitness product SpinGym who you may also remember co-hosting Jack LaLanne's juicer infomercial, is a big fan of detoxing. It's how she lost her pregnancy weight gain at the age of 42 after giving birth to twins. She suggests you use a sauna regularly. "There's nothing more detoxing than sweating it out," she says.



Hot Bath With Epsom Salt

Soaking for 20 minutes in a hot bath with Epsom salts allows your skin to absorb the magnesium and other minerals and nutrients in the salt that promotes the body's natural detox process.

Eat Cruciferous Vegetables

Kale, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, kale, collard greens, and cauliflower are high in antioxidants that support the body in fighting toxins

Berries And Colorful Produce

The bright colored, red, blue and purple fruits and vegetables contain high levels of key antioxidants that help fight free radicals and activate key liver enzymes that help to "knock out" harmful substances in the body.

Twisting Yoga Poses

Naturally stimulate digestion and elimination.

Drink Fresh Vegetable Smoothies

Vegetables are high in fiber that supports digestion, provide nutrients that support liver health and improve digestion.



Eat Sulfur-Rich Foods

Garlic and onions are high in antioxidants that help the body fight free radicals and repel toxins

Consume Turmeric and Green tea

The spice turmeric and 100% pure green tea supports the body's detoxification pathways.

Eat Lean Protein

Protein helps maintain healthy levels of glutathione in the body, which is its main detoxification enzyme.

Fill Nutritional Gaps

If your diet lacks a well-rounded balance of vitamins and minerals, consider taking a multivitamin, as nutrients are key in supporting the body's detoxification processes.

Fermented Foods

Yogurt, kimchi, kefir, and sauerkraut contain natural probiotics, or good gut bacteria that help promote healthy digestion and help the body release toxins from microbes that dwell in the gut.



Fruits And Vegetables

Fruits and vegetables contain vital micronutrients and phytochemicals that are not found in anything else. If you're allowing your body to have all it needs nutritionally, it will be able to perform detox functions much easier.

Eat More Fiber

Fiber supports the body's digestive systems and helps keep you regular, which in turn supports the body in its natural detoxification and cleansing processes, it comes in two forms.

The **soluble fiber** variety dissolves in water to form a gel in the digestive tract.

Main Types Of Soluble Fiber

- **Beta glucans** – obtained from barley, rye and oats
- **Pectin** - vegetables, fruits and legumes
- **Natural gums** - found in gum acacia, seaweed, and certain types of seeds
- **Inulin** – obtained from wheat products, chicory, onions, and artichokes

Insoluble fiber does not dissolve in water and passes through the gut relatively unchanged.

Sources Of Insoluble Fiber

- Oat bran
- Flax seeds
- Artichokes
- Kidney beans
- Winter squash
- Fruit with peel such as apples and pears
- Sunflower seeds
- Nuts
- Corn
- Sweet Potatoes
- Squash
- Green Peas
- Carrots
- Brussels Sprouts
- Broccoli
- Kale
- Spinach
- Berries



Milk Thistle (*Silybum Marianum*)

Silymarin in the herb milk thistle has been shown by research to help protect the liver from various industrial toxins, such as carbon tetrachloride. Milk thistle promotes healthy liver function because it helps to remove toxins.

Detox And Cleanse Safety Tips And Considerations

- Always consult an appropriately credited health professional before starting any cleanse or detox diet. The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics says, *“Many noncredentialed people claim to be experts in detoxification, and many seasoned health professionals are not well versed in detoxification protocols. Because detoxification programs can vary widely and may pose a risk for some people (such as people with multiple maladies, those who take multiple medications and pregnant or breast-feeding women), it is important to work with a credentialed health professional who understands your health status and goals and who is able to evaluate detoxification programs for safety and effectiveness. Consider working with an integrative and functional medicine dietitian.”*
- The ADA advises you not to attempt a detox diet more than three times a year. It can lead to yo-yo dieting, which can be detrimental to your health.
- Eat five to nine servings a day of vegetables and fruit, which provide your vitamins and minerals, antioxidants and dietary fiber. However, the BDA emphasizes that you should eat a wide range of fruit and veggies, not just one type. An apple a day might keep the doctor away, but nine apples a day might do the opposite. Avoid detox diets that encourage you to eliminate all carbohydrates. Eliminating complex carbs means you’re eliminating an important source of fiber, which is important for the natural detox process in your body.
- Fasting is not advised. Although rapid weight loss can occur with fasting, the weight loss is usually water and glycogen, rather than fat. Fasting can also result in fatigue and dizziness, says the BDA. Moreover, you’re more than likely to return to your bad eating habits at the end of the fast and put all your weight back on.
- Avoid colon cleansers. There is no scientific evidence to back up the theory that colon cleansers are healthy, according to WebMD, which labels them a fad. Colon cleansing, it

says, is based on the incorrect theory that waste collects in your colon over time and stagnates there, polluting your body with toxins – in a process dubbed as auto-intoxication.

Colon cleansers range from laxatives and enemas to “high colonics” which flush water through your intestine to clean it out. Not only are colon cleansers unnecessary but they can be harmful, warns WebMD. They can lead to dehydration and, in extreme cases, perforate the colon. They can also interfere with the absorption of nutrients, causing a deficiency of vitamins and minerals. The ADA also warns people who undergo colonics are at risk of contracting an infection, and can suffer electrolyte imbalances.

- The ADA also points out the dangers of a raw-food detoxification diet. It says they put you at risk of contracting parasites or foodborne illnesses normally killed off during cooking and some raw veggies, such as rhubarb leaves, buckwheat sprouts, kidney bean sprouts are toxic if consumed in great quantities.

Final Thoughts

While all cleanses advocate for an increase in the consumption of water and lemon juice, few agree on much after that.

Giving your body the ability to naturally filter things through the liver and kidneys is the best way to detox. You don't want to force evacuate your bowels or starve yourself.

It is important to keep your digestive tract running smoothly. Any detox that advocates mass-evacuation of your digestive tract should be avoided. You want to keep your good gut flora intact. Adding a good dietary probiotic such as found in yogurt, will aid your digestion.



These are the simplest and healthiest methods to detox your body. Try them and see how it improves your overall health.

Stay well and take care!