

Simplifying Detox Fact Sheet

This fact sheet has been prepared to help you to complete a successful detox.



Most people prefer to complete a detox in the warmer months when they feel more inclined to exercise and eat lightly. Having said that, there is no reason why a detox cannot be completed in winter as you can still bake vegetables and have warm foods like brown rice or roasted fish or lamb. The best time of year is whatever feels right to you. The most popular times are in January (New Year's resolutions), Spring (Spring cleaning), December (getting ready for summer), Easter

(getting ready for the holidays). Each of those periods approximates the change of season.

It is important to prepare before starting a detox, as if carried out carelessly, a detox can make you feel unwell and may even bring on what natural health care practitioners call a healing crisis, which involves flu-like symptoms, headaches, nausea and rashes, due to toxins which have been stored in fat deposits being released into the blood stream. A properly planned detox will avoid a healing crisis and minimise any discomfort.

If you have had glandular fever, work with volatile chemicals, regularly drink alcohol or have had several anaesthetics, you need to be careful about the liver cleansing stage of the Detox. If this is the case, start slowly under supervision of a qualified health care professional as you are more likely to experience some side effects of the circulating toxins.

The benefits of detoxing

Given that we live in an age where exposure to chemicals and pollution is difficult to avoid, and levels of oxygen in the air that we breathe have been gradually declining, an annual detox is the best insurance policy for a long and healthy life. Much in the same way most people give their car a service every six to twelve months, your body needs the same. If you have never completed a detox before, the first detox will always be the hardest. Years of accumulated toxins will be harder to correct than subsequent detoxes. After a week or so on a detox your body will feel cleaner, you should have lost a few kilos and will notice an increase in your energy levels. If you continue to follow our tips for healthy eating you will find that your energy levels will continue to improve, you feel healthier and notice that you are less likely to come down with colds and flu in the future. It is even likely that your sense of taste may improve.

Getting started

If your regular working week is Monday to Friday, a Friday is a good day to start as usually any symptoms that occur due to the release of toxins will occur on days 2 and 3 which fall over the

weekend. If you don't work regular hours, plan a detox to start the day before a two day break. Clean out your pantry and ensure you don't have any sweet or high sugar foods around to tempt you.

Foods to eat

- Drink 2 litres of filtered water per day- this needs to be spaced evenly throughout the day and preferably between meals.
- Fish — but only deep-sea fish of the oily variety, such as salmon which is less likely to contain heavy metals
- Lamb and turkey are easier for the body to digest than beef and chicken- but only low fat cuts of meat
- Use methods of cooking which preserve as many nutrients as possible- e.g. steaming, baking and grilling
- Eat food in season and preferably organic — if you choose to buy non organic fruits and vegetables, wash well to remove chemical residues
- Focus on vegetarian proteins rather than animal ones as they are easier to digest e.g. tofu
- Whole grains such as brown rice, wholemeal pasta (preferably gluten free)

Use ginger, chilli, and wheat free tamari (similar to soy sauce) to flavour your food

Foods to avoid

Avoid gluters (wheat, rye oats, barley) dairy products, alcohol, caffeine, refined/processed/high-fat/high-sugar foods

What to do — A Typical Day

Upon waking

Mix the juice of one freshly squeezed lemon into a 250ml glass of warm water and drink

For breakfast

Freshly prepared juice — or a fruit smoothie which might include mango, banana and blueberry or fruit juice such as apple, pear and strawberry. If you want something more substantial you can have scrambled eggs, pancakes (use wholemeal flour) soy yoghurt, use non-dairy substitutes such as soy milk. You can still have toast- trying spreading it with avocado instead of butter and make sure you use wholemeal bread.

For lunch

Any homemade warm soup, such as beetroot soup, spinach soup or a miso soup, wholemeal salad sandwich, wholemeal pasta (gluten free) with pesto, or homemade tomato sauce. If you are still hungry you can follow up with soy yogurt or a piece of fruit.

For dinner

Baked salmon with steamed vegetables or lettuce, or steamed turkey with ginger, shallots and brown rice.

Snacks

Blueberries, rice cakes, almonds, carrot sticks, celery sticks and grapes

To drink

Herbal tea such as peppermint or dandelion to aid digestion, vegetable juice, filtered water with freshly squeezed lemon juice

See Teresa Cutter's recipes on www.herbsandhealth.com.au — these are all suitable for use whilst detoxing.

How is my body likely to respond?

Generally not much will happen the first day; you might find your bowels are looser, although you shouldn't need to 'rush to the toilet'.

You may feel lethargic the first few days, and experience a mild headache. This is because the toxins are being released by your liver and circulating in the blood stream before being excreted. Resist taking paracetamol or aspirin, as these will only put more stress on your liver. It is preferable to drink plenty of fresh filtered water to flush the toxins out of your body. If you must take a pain reliever, try the herb Willow Bark (aspirin was originally derived from this plant) or Feverfew.

Should I exercise?

It is recommended to only exercise lightly, particularly in the first few days of the detox when you may be feeling quite lethargic.

Understanding how my liver actually detoxifies

A healthy liver uses two mechanisms, called Phase I and Phase II detoxification, to remove toxins. In Phase I, the body's enzymes activate toxic substances to make them more accessible to Phase II. In Phase II, other enzymes convert the toxins to more water-soluble forms, which your body eliminates through the kidneys or bowels.

An unhealthy liver does not detoxify substances as rapidly or as completely as a healthy liver. Slower detoxification results in a build up of toxic substances that continue to circulate through the body. Unchanged or partially changed toxins are not easily eliminated and instead pass from the liver into the body. Eventually, the toxins are stored in fat tissue, including the brain and central nervous system. Stored toxins may be slowly released into the blood, contributing to many chronic illnesses.

How will my body handle a detox?

An easy way to assess your body's detox capacity (although there are tests to assess this) is to drink a cup of tea or coffee and note how long it takes for your body to clear the caffeine from your system. If it takes you more than two hours for the stimulating effects to wear off and it interferes with your sleep, you have a problem with Phase I detox. If you are sensitive to volatile smells, such as chemical fumes or perfumes, you have a problem with Phase I stage. If you experience a tenderness over your liver (under right lower ribs) after taking a drug, alcohol or anaesthetic, or if these chemicals cause you to feel queasy or vomit, you have an increased Phase I stage and reduced Phase II stage which allows toxic metabolites to store longer in your liver, thus inflaming it. If you can eat fat, drink coffee or alcohol and take paracetamol without any problems you have good liver clearance for both Phase I and Phase II stages.

How do herbs help the liver?

St Mary's Thistle

Milk Thistle also known as "Silybum Marianum", is a herb with remarkable detoxifying and liver protective effects and has been recommended in herbal texts since the late 1600's. Its most active constituent is silymarin, which is a bioflavonoid. Research has shown that Milk Thistle can protect against some severe liver toxins. Most liver toxins, including alcohol, produce damage to cell membranes via free radical generation. Silymarin functions as an antioxidant and reduces damage to cell membranes. It prevents the formation of leukotrienes, which are dangerous inflammatory chemicals produced by the immune system. Silymarin can increase the quantity of the powerful liver protector glutathione, and improve protein synthesis in the liver. Silymarin is able to speed up the regeneration of healthy liver cells (hepatocytes) after different types of liver damage, and can exert worthwhile protection of the liver cells (hepatocytes) against antibiotics, chemotherapy drugs, paracetamol and some antidepressant drugs.

Dandelion

Dandelion, also known by herbalists as *Taraxacum Officinale* and its root has been used for liver and biliary complaints for centuries. Dandelion has also been used in China, India and Nepal for liver ailments and today dandelion is used widely as a tonic for the liver.

Dandelion is considered a bitter herb; it is the bitter taste that stimulates the digestive glands and the liver and activates the flow of bile. Although dandelion's specific action is on the liver, it also acts as a general body tonic due to its laxative, diuretic, and anti-inflammatory effect. This makes it useful for liver and gall bladder inflammation and congestion, as well as jaundiced states. It can also be helpful in the early stages of cirrhosis of the liver, such as alcoholic cirrhosis.

Liquid Chlorophyll

Chlorophyll is found abundantly in plants and is responsible for the characteristic green colour of plants. This natural deodoriser is derived from a natural source and assists in cleansing the body and eliminating toxins.

Hydrated Bentonite

If you have ever used a clay mask on your face you will be aware that clay is a powerful ingredient to draw out toxins. Hydrated Bentonite is safe for internal use and is made from Montmorillonite clay, named for the city of Montmarillon in France where it was first discovered by modern medicine. Therapeutically when taken internally, it supports the intestinal system in the elimination of unwanted toxins due to its powerful ability to 'adsorb' toxins.

What supplements should I take?

Find a good quality liver tonic that contains St Mary's Thistle in a dose of around 6 grams per tablet. There are higher doses available, however your body can only absorb a certain amount of the herb and any excess will simply be excreted in your urine. Spread the dosage throughout the day, as smaller doses taken more frequently are generally more effective. Ideally your supplement should also contain some of the other herbs mentioned.

Liquid Chlorophyll and Hydrated Bentonite can be taken for the duration of your detox and will assist the cleansing process. If you wish to take a bowel cleansing product, look for a good quality brand containing herbs such as Cascara and Black Walnut.

How long should I detox for?

It takes 6-8 weeks for every cell in your liver to regenerate, so strictly speaking, if you have never detoxed before, you would need to detox for at least this amount of time to ensure full regeneration of your liver. If you are unable to adhere to this, you should at least watch your diet and take liver cleansing herbs for the 6-8 weeks. Ideally a minimum of 2 weeks is essential to achieve a good result and a weekly detox every year there after should be all you need.

How do I maintain myself for the rest of the year?

As our healthy chef Teresa Cutter suggests in Herbs & Health, if you can eat well 80% of the time and treat yourself 20% of the time, you should maintain your good health

Herbs & Health prescription for healthy eating includes

- Eating wholefoods rich in fibre
- Eat low glycaemic index foods (these foods are slower for your body to digest which helps keep your blood sugar levels stable giving you a steady source of energy throughout the day.)
- Avoid salt, saturated fats and preservatives
- Don't rush eating your food
- Avoid eating heavy meals at night- these will literally sit in your stomach all night and may cause indigestion
- Reduce alcohol and caffeine intake
- Drink at least two litres of filtered/fresh water per day, preferably between meals

- Avoid antibiotics unless absolutely necessary, and if you do take a course, follow up with a pro-biotic supplement such as acidophilus to replace the friendly bacteria removed by the antibiotics.
- Take a good antioxidant supplement and also St Mary's Thistle to protect your liver

The most important thing is to avoid acid forming foods and eat as many alkaline foods as possible. Traditionally those living in western societies eat too many acid-forming foods and this can contribute to the causes of illness. The desired balance is 80% alkaline and 20% acid each day.

Alkalizing Foods

Maintaining proper alkalinity is essential for life, health, and vitality. Simply put — an imbalance of alkalinity creates a condition favourable to the growth of bacteria, yeast and other unwanted organisms, all of which can lead to disease.

Your body works at its optimum level in an alkaline environment.

The following foods create an alkaline state in the body:

- Potatoes
- Green vegetables, raw or cooked, salad greens, cabbage, etc.
- Coloured vegetables: carrots, beets (except for tomatoes) corn (kernels or cooked as polenta)
- Milk (liquid and powdered form), large-curd cottage cheese, cream and butter (avoid dairy whilst Detoxing)
- Bananas
- Almonds, Brazil nuts and Chestnuts
- Dried fruits: dates, raisins (except those that are acidic to the taste-apricots, apples, pineapple)
- Almond milk
- Black olives preserved in oil
- Avocado
- Cold-pressed oils
- Natural sugar — such as those found in fruits

Acidic Foods

People who lead stressful lives and who consume large amounts of acidifying foods such as protein, sugar, processed food, cereals, starches, and caffeine, and seldom eat alkalising vegetables may experience the following symptoms:

- Excess mucous production
- Nasal congestion
- Frequent colds, flu and infections
- Nervous, stressed, irritable, anxious, agitated
- Weak nails, dry hair, dry skin
- Headaches
- Joint pain or arthritis
- Neuritis
- Muscle pain
- Hives
- Leg cramps and spasms
- Gastritis, acid indigestion
- Low energy, chronic fatigue

If you experience the above symptoms, eating the following foods could be causing a problem:

- Refined flour products: White bread and pasta
- Grains: White rice
- Sugary cereals and desserts: Cakes, pies, biscuits
- Sugars: White and brown sugar
- Beans: Soybeans, chickpeas and red beans
- Red meat: Beef, pork, lamb and cold cuts
- Fatty fish: Salmon, herring and mackerel
- Crustaceans: Lobster, shrimp and mussels
- Condiments: Capers, pickles, mustard, tomato sauce and mayonnaise
- Fats: Hydrogenated margarine and lard
- Beverages: Coffee, tea, chocolate milk, soft drinks, tomato juice, orange juice, grapefruit juice, wine and strong spirits

A final word

Natural therapists have long recognised that the mind, body and spirit are connected, and indeed the link between an unhealthy mind and illness is well proven. It is not enough to simply eat well and exercise regularly. You need to look after your mental wellbeing and stress levels. The following tips are equally important:

- Aim to regularly get eight hours of quality sleep per night.

- Find a half hour to an hour each day to do something just for you, walk, spend time with your family, knit a scarf, read a book, soak in the bath- or whatever makes you happy.
- Think positive thoughts-positive thoughts create abundance. Keep focused on the good things in life.

If you do have worries, write in a journal or share them with a good friend.

Dedicate yourself to continuous personal improvement. You are your most precious resource.
Brian Tracy

The thoughts we choose to think are the tools we use to paint the canvas of our lives.
Louise Hay

This fact sheet is produced by the team at Herbs & Health

As we are all individuals, people respond differently to herbs. Always remember to read product labels carefully and if you experience any symptoms that concern you, ensure you consult your health care professional promptly.

If you have any questions about this Fact Sheet, please email
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