


# Detox This

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Spring is traditionally a time of rebirth, rejuvenation and purification. This season, help detoxify the body with some guidelines to cleanse and clear your way to better health.



**Y**OU CHANGE THE OILS and filters in your car, you wash the dishes and scrub the bathroom sink. You take a shower and you make sure to clean between your fingers. But how often do you cleanse your body from the inside?


From cigarette smoke and traffic emissions to pesticides in foods and chemicals in personal care products, the body becomes a storage factory for chemicals as it's exposed to toxins in our environment. An estimated 40 million pounds of toxic substances are released into the air annually. The accumulation of toxicity can take its toll on vitality and eventually lead to a host of problems. Common symptoms that may indicate your body needs a detox include lethargy, headaches, poor concentration, infertility, constipation, skin rashes, eczema, allergies, depression, prostate problems, muscle aches and PMS.

So what exactly is a detox? Detoxification is the process of purifying the body of compounds that have a detrimental effect on cell functions or structures. When one starts the process of detoxification, the body begins to discharge excesses that have been carried for years.

According to traditional Chinese medicine, the

body changes in response to the seasons of the year, just like every other living thing in the environment. Interestingly, springtime is commonly known as the time for purifying the liver, which in modern physiology is the main organ that houses toxins. During the winter, the body goes into conservation mode, storing and preserving the body's energy; the excess thereby creates a build-up of heat in the body. It's no wonder so many people feel dragged down by extra pounds they've packed away during a long, cold winter season. Through a springtime detox, the excess heat is slowly released and the body experiences a cooling, cleansing release.

A complete body detox should be individually tailored for your personal health concerns and supervised by a trained healthcare professional. This is especially important if you want to enhance the procedure with fasting, homeopathics, herbs and supplements—or if you've never detoxified your body before. You may not feel well during the initial period of detoxification, as your toxic load is being mobilized prior to being excreted: some side-effects include feeling weak, headachy, nauseated or lightheaded.



It's possible to detoxify in one to three days under controlled conditions, although there are a few gentle daily practices that can be incorporated to assist the body's natural spring cleaning. The following tips will help boost immunity and keep the body clear and in good working order.

1. Certain herbs, vitamins and homeopathics are valuable in the process of detoxification, and specific juices can be advised for different clinical situations. For example, in detoxification in patients with an ulcer, raw cabbage juice is used. Some common juices which can also be taken are apple, lemon, carrot and grape. An herb known as milk thistle is sometimes supplemented with silymarin (70 - 210 mg) three times daily, but should not be self-prescribed. Ultimately, these all serve to prevent cholestasis (stagnation of bile), the likelihood of stones being formed and the systemic retentions of toxins.

2. Mild teas may be used frequently by anyone on a spring detox. Teas include alfalfa, burdock, dandelion and rosehip. One safe and effective herb that is widely available in Jordan is dandelion, which is rich in vitamins A and C, calcium and potassium. Medicinally, the roots can be ingested as juice, tea, a tincture or in a capsule, three times a day before meals. Energetically, dandelion is a cooling herb that helps drain the liver. It is a diuretic, bitter, mild laxative and blood purifier.

3. Exercise. Stretching stimulates and unplugs your lymph glands, which are your body's plumbing system, flushing and removing waste so that your immune system runs smoothly. Aerobic activities help your lungs eliminate toxins through the breath, and your skin to release toxins through sweating.

4. Get plenty of rest. A mid-day nap is also a good idea on the first few days of your new routine.

5. Drink plenty of water: it's one of the best ways to eliminate toxins from your body. Water is the medium through which the kidneys excrete waste from the blood.

6. Adequate fiber intake is a very important in supporting detox. Current research recommends 40 grams of fiber on a daily basis to prevent cancer. Most people who don't eat whole grains and five to seven servings of fruits and vegetables a day do not get enough fiber. White bread,

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Detox experts unanimously agree that the following substances should be strictly avoided during any detox period:

Alcohol  
Cigarettes and other sources of nicotine  
Caffeine, especially from coffee and black tea  
High-sugar foods  
Hydrogenated oils (a.k.a., trans-fats)

processed foods and quick meals seem to be the norm, which all are lacking in their fiber content.

Fiber binds heavy metals and other substances in the bowels so that they leave the body. A person who does not have one to three bowel movements a day is not regular and has increased exposure to toxins that should not remain in the body for long periods. The good bacteria in the colon are also nourished by the fiber in whole grains, fruits, and vegetables, and this in turn reduces gut-derived toxins.

Switch to using whole grains in your cereals and breads and slowly include a higher ratio of vegetables in your meals. Snack on a piece of fibrous fruit instead of a chocolate bar, and watch how much better you feel.

If you want to detox on your own—and you don't have serious health problems and aren't on medication or pregnant—sticking with the above recommendations will make a huge difference. People with specific illnesses or concerns should seek the advice of a trained healthcare provider. **JO**

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