



ILLUSTRATION: JIM TSINGANOS

body detox.

Even if you take good care of yourself, you're still bombarded with toxins in your food, water, and air. Here's how to detox safely, effectively and easily.

When things are going well, your body freely eliminates harmful invaders. However, it can only handle so much before it reaches a tipping point, and we are now exposed to a complex, persistent mixture of toxins. In fact, according to Dr Gaetano Morello, ND, a leading Canadian naturopathic doctor and author of *Whole Body Cleansing* (Active Interest Media), "The question is no longer **whether** we are toxic, but rather, **how** do we get rid of these toxins?" Unsurprisingly, the lowered ability of the body to clear toxins may be the root cause of many health problems. Fortunately, you can send those toxins packing with this seven-day detox. As a bonus, you're likely to see a reduction in allergies, headaches, sinus problems and bloating, feel more energised, have clearer skin and eyes, and even lose some weight.

Do-it-yourself detox

- **Take the load off your digestive system by only eating healthy foods.** Develop the habit of consuming as many local, seasonal and organic ingredients as possible. There is no need for a strict fast. When you eat nutrient-dense foods, you provide your body with the necessary raw ingredients to support ongoing detoxification.
- **Allow the unhealthy foods to fall by the wayside** as you make conscious decisions to nourish and heal your

body. Eat the best possible foods over the next seven days and savour the results.

- **Support kidney function by drinking plenty of pure water.** Avoid chlorine and fluoride contaminants common in urban water supplies.
- **Improve lymphatic circulation to speed detoxification.** Saunas, lymphatic drainage massage, magnesium salt baths, body scrubbing, yoga and meditation all help speed the smooth flow of toxins from the body.
- **Support breakdown and elimination of toxins via the liver.** This organ acts as the body's main clearing house and, ideally, filters out toxic substances in the blood before the blood returns to general

PURGE THE PLASTIC

New research reveals it's crucial to avoid canned food and plastic packaging. This *Environmental Health Perspectives* study shows food packaging is the major source of exposure to bisphenol A (BPA) and bis(2-ethylhexyl) phthalate (DEHP). The good news? The study also showed levels of these endocrine-disrupting chemicals can drop by half in just three days when families switch to a fresh food diet.

A detox improves your health and leads to healthy lifetime habits that maintain your immunity, digestion, and circulation.

circulation. Formulas that assist liver detoxification pathways usually supply B vitamins and the amino acids choline, glycine, methionine, glycine and taurine.

- **Nourish the digestive system** - a good quality fibre supplement is an essential component of colon cleansing. Soluble fibre soothes and protects the digestive tract to ease elimination. Consider colonic hydrotherapy if you have a history of constipation and suspect impaction of faecal matter lining the colon.
- **Add these natural health supplements:** a high quality multivitamin and mineral formula, a probiotic supplement, a greens drink and essential fats from Udo's Choice Organic Oil Blend.

Are you at risk?

Exposure to environmental chemicals eventually disrupts or even permanently damages neurons (the cells that transmit



TAKE CARE OF YOUR TEETH

Detox programs are not without potential pitfalls. According to holistic dentist Dr David Cowhig of Dental Wellness, Brisbane the use of lemon juice and apple cider vinegar may contribute to tooth enamel loss. Cowhig explains, "The enamel is the outer shell of your teeth and it will dissolve easily when the pH on the surface drops into the acid zone. Although saliva is able to buffer acidic solutions, the surface of the enamel cannot withstand exposure." Cowhig therefore cautions against brushing your teeth within 40 minutes of using these remedies, "as this will simply brush your enamel away forever."

and process instructions from the brain to the body). Muscle weakness, mood changes, fatigue and signs of cognitive decline can be clues you are suffering from a toxic overload. An *Occupational and Environmental Medicine* study has shown that pesticides are particularly damaging: being deliberately formulated to eradicate living organisms by creating nervous system toxicity, they therefore pose a serious threat to human health.

Improve your health and the health of the planet by buying organic produce whenever possible. According to another study, published in *Alternative Medicine Review*, this single choice dramatically increases your intake of protective phytochemicals and lowers exposure to pesticide residues, as well as supporting sustainable food production.

Drink up!

Did you get your five to six servings of fruits and vegetables today? How about yesterday and the day before that? Chances are you could be missing out on essential nutrients. Juicing fresh fruits and vegetables is a daily cleansing ritual that ensures you obtain a vibrant range of concentrated nutrients and live enzymes. Just remember to only juice ripe and raw fruit and vegetables. Plus, it's best to drink juice that is freshly prepared – don't keep freshly made juices for more than a few hours, as they quickly lose their nutrient content.

The added benefit of fresh juices is their impact on restoring optimal pH in your body. Vegetable juices, in

particular, alkalise your body - think carrots, beetroot, celery and kale. Your body thrives when it can maintain a steady alkaline state. Unfortunately stress, sugar, coffee, alcohol and processed foods are acid-producing and rapidly disrupt the finely tuned acid:alkaline balance. Using a pH testing strip to assess your saliva is a quick way to discover if your internal environment is overly acidic. Ask your healthcare practitioner about this simple test.

Detoxifying supplements

These nutrients provide a comprehensive foundation to help you detox safely.

Alpha lipoic acid

(ALA): Over-exposure to free radicals is the major cause of ageing and degenerative diseases, and ALA is a potent natural scavenger of free radicals. ALA aids the clearance of heavy metals like mercury, lead and cadmium; it also recycles the antioxidant vitamins A, C and E to extend their action.

Folic acid and vitamin B12:

These vitamins work together to support methylation detoxification systems that eliminate toxic compounds. A test of blood homocysteine, a specific amino acid, can indicate how well methylation pathways are working.

Iodine: This mighty mineral supports thyroid hormone activity, shifting your metabolic rate into high gear. The events surrounding the Japanese Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant disaster have created a growing awareness of the impact of iodine on thyroid health. When iodine stores are low, the thyroid absorbs

Increasing the amount of chlorophyll in your diet is an excellent way to deliver oxygen throughout the body, build new tissue, and boost immunity.

CLEANSING HERBS

These are my top four recommendations to take during and after your detox:

Burdock (*Arctium lappa*) A natural blood purifier to remove accumulated waste products from the body. Skin conditions like eczema, psoriasis, dandruff and chronic acne all show improvement with using this herb.

Dandelion leaf (*Taraxacum officinalis*) This acts as a natural diuretic to help the kidneys filter blood and excrete waste. Generally an imbalance of potassium and sodium leads to fluid retention. This herb is a rich source of potassium. It is well accepted conventional diuretic drugs can deplete potassium levels.

Oregano oil (*Origanum vulgare*) This wild-crafted oil contains natural compounds to combat bacterial and fungal infections and ease digestive complaints. A *Toxicology In Vitro* study has shown it can stop the growth of *E. coli*, the main bacteria responsible for food poisoning and traveller's diarrhoea.

St Mary's thistle (*Silybum marianum*) Regarded as the herbal mainstay for liver conditions, this remedy is usually standardised to contain silymarin, a powerful compound that protects liver cells from a variety of toxins. Silymarin can help repair damaged liver cells due to alcohol and drug exposure.

harmful radioactive iodine from the environment. Taking an iodine supplement prevents and treats a deficiency.

Molybdenum: This essential trace element is a required cofactor to support enzymatic clearance pathways of the liver. Most importantly, it supports clearance of sulphites, preservatives commonly used in food and wine. A sulphite reaction, including sensitivity to sulphur dioxide (220), can indicate lowered molybdenum stores.

Pycnogenol®: The extract of the bark of the French maritime pine (*Pinus pinaster*) is a rich source of oligomeric proanthocyanidins (OPCs), potent super-antioxidants with a capability to

SIX TOP DETOX FOODS

Here are my top recommendations to revitalise health the natural way:

1. Greens drink: A living green superfoods drink is highly alkalising. Premium quality greens products can be found at your local health food store. These products usually contain a mix of ingredients, such as alfalfa, green barley, wheat grass, spirulina and chlorella. These superfoods are used in a wide range of detoxification programs, including heavy metal elimination.

2. Coconut oil: This raw, wild-harvested tropical oil has long been used as a staple food in traditional diets. The health benefits are mainly due to its rich lauric acid content, a medium-chain triglyceride that has the power to enhance the immune system, warding off viruses, bacteria and other pathogens. Unlike soy and canola oils, organic coconut oil is not loaded with dangerous trans fats or processed with unsafe hexane solvents.

3. Dark leafy greens: Spinach, kale, bok choy and beetroot tops are super nutritious, and a rich source of chlorophyll, a plant pigment that harnesses the sun's natural energy. Chlorophyll has many health benefits, including the ability to bind to and remove toxic heavy metals like mercury. Choose organic greens and eat them raw or lightly steamed.

4. Garlic: This versatile healing herb has powerful antioxidant properties and is a rich source of sulphur compounds to support liver detoxification pathways.

5. Whey protein shakes: A high quality whey protein shake provides essential branch chain amino acids, which are required to maintain muscle mass and preserve muscle stores of glycogen for ongoing energy production. These branch chain amino acids - leucine, isoleucine and valine - are termed essential as the body is unable to manufacture them; they therefore must be obtained from the diet. Diets that restrict calories or involve fasting can lead to muscle breakdown.

6. Psyllium husk: This is an excellent source of soluble dietary fibre, which helps to both absorb and flush waste products via the colon. The typical dose is ½ to 2 teaspoons mixed in one cup of water. Detox products containing senna should be avoided as they over-stimulate the bowel.



act as a frontline defence system against all aggressive free radicals.

Selenium: This trace mineral plays a critical role in cellular detoxification because it is a vital glutathione precursor. Glutathione, found in every cell of the body, is termed 'the master antioxidant', due to its critical role in safeguarding cellular renewal. A selenium deficiency can lower glutathione activity.

Zinc: This is required for proper immune system function, healthy skin and the maintenance of vision, taste and smell.

It is also essential to support the biochemical reactions that form superoxide dismutase, one of the body's most important naturally occurring free radical scavengers.



LOUISE O'CONNOR is a leading naturopath who writes and educates on natural thyroid health. Discover ThyroSynergy: Natural Thyroid Health Formula at: www.thyrosynergy.com.