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Detoxification – A Dirty Job, But Everyone’s Got To Do IT.

One of the fundamental aspects of my practice as a Certified Clinical Nutritionist is detoxification. Cleansing or detoxification is one part of the trilogy of nutritional action; the other actions are building or toning, and balance or maintenance. Our bodies handle toxins by neutralizing, transforming, or eliminating them. The liver helps transform many toxic substances into harmless agents, while the blood carries wastes to the kidneys; the liver also dumps wastes through the bile into the intestines, where much waste is eliminated. We also clear toxins through sweating, from exercise or heat. Our sinuses and skin may also be accessory elimination organs whereby excess mucus or toxins can be released, as with sinus congestion or skin rashes, respectively. Toxicity occurs in our body when we take in more than we can utilize and eliminate. Homeostasis means that our body functions are in balance. This balance is disturbed when we expose ourselves to more than we can utilize or partake of specific substances that are toxic.

Toxicity occurs on two basic levels -- external and internal. From the external level we can acquire toxins from our environment by: breathing them, ingesting them, or physical contact with them. We all are exposed to toxins daily. We eat and drink them and impose them upon ourselves repeatedly and regularly. Most drugs, food additives, and allergens can create toxic elements in the body. In fact, any substance can have toxicity—water, sodium, and almost all nutrients can be a problem in certain circumstances.

According to EPA studies more than 1,000,000,000 pounds of chemicals are released into the ground, threatening a portion of the soil we grow our food in and the natural underground water tables that supply some of our drinking water. Over 188,000,000 pounds of chemicals are also discharged into surface waters such as lakes and rivers. More than 2,400,000,000 pounds of chemical emissions are pumped into the air we breathe. In just one year, a grand total of 5,705,670,380 pounds of chemical pollutants are released into the environment we eat, breathe, and live in.

From the internal level our body produces toxins through its normal everyday functions. Biochemical, cellular, and bodily activities generate substances that need to be eliminated. Microbes of all kinds such as, intestinal bacteria, foreign bacteria, yeasts, and parasites produce metabolic waste products that we must handle. When these substances/molecules/toxins are not eliminated, they can cause irritation or inflammation of the cells and tissues, blocking normal functions on a cellular, organ, and whole-body level. Our thoughts, emotions and stress generate increased biochemical toxicity. The proper level of elimination of these toxins is essential to health.

Of course, if our body is working well, with good immune and eliminative functions, we can handle our basic everyday exposure to toxins. Clearly, a normal functioning body was created to handle certain levels of toxins; but the concern is with excess intake or production of toxins or a reduction in the processes of elimination. The purpose of this article is to emphasize the importance of supporting the elimination of toxins, excessive mucus, and congestion, and prevent the day-to-day buildup of toxicity. Through detoxification, we clear and filter toxins and waste and allow our bodies to work on enhancing basic functions.

Almost everyone needs to detox, cleanse him or herself and rest their body functions at times. With a regular balanced diet devoid of excesses, we will need less intensive detoxification. Our body has a daily elimination cycle mostly carried out at night and in the early morning up until breakfast. However, when we eat a congesting diet higher in fats, meats, dairy products, refined foods, and chemicals, detoxification becomes more necessary. The decision to detoxify is based on individual lifestyle and needs. The following symptoms indicate a need to detoxify your body.

Nausea	Sore throat	Immune weakness
Dizziness	Indigestion	Tight or stiff neck
Environmental sensitivity	Mood changes	Anorexia
Angina pectoris	Sore throat	Allergies
Fatigue	Joint pains	Itchy nose
Nervousness	Skin rashes	Cough
Frequent colds	Sleepiness	Hives
Wheezing	Constipation	Runny nose

Often the following problems are alleviated by eliminating the related toxins and following a good detox and restoration program:

Acne	Obesity	Prostate disease
Abscess	Infections	Menstrual problems
Boils	Bacteria	Vaginitis
Eczema	Virus	Varicose veins
Allergies	Fungus	Diabetes
Arthritis	Parasites	Peptic ulcers
Asthma	Worms	Gastritis
Constipation	Uterine fibroid tumors	Pancreatitis
Colitis	Cancer	Mental illness
Hemorrhoids	Cataracts	Multiple sclerosis
Diverticulitis	Colds	Alzheimer's disease
Cirrhosis	Bronchitis	Senility
Hepatitis	Pneumonia	Parkinson's disease

Fibrocystic breast
Atherosclerosis
Heart disease
Hypertension
Thrombophlebitis

Sinusitis
Emphysema
Kidney stones
Kidney disease
Stroke

Drug addiction
Tension headaches
Migraine headaches
Gallstones
Gout

Of course, not all of these conditions are solely problems of toxicity or are they completely cured by detoxification. Most of these diseases have to do with abuses, especially on a nutritional level. It is my opinion that in order to maintain optimum health everybody should do some sort of detoxifying program at least once a year.

“Detoxification” is a relative term. Anything that supports our elimination can be said to help us detoxify. Doing nothing more than drinking an extra quart of water a day will usually help us eliminate more toxins. Eating more fruits and high-water-content vegetables, cleansing foods-and less meat and milk products will create less congestion and more elimination. There are many levels of the progressive detoxification diets, from these simple changes to complete fasting. Though congestion from over intake and under elimination is more common in our culture, I occasionally see over elimination or over detoxification, which is also a concern. Some people go to extremes with fasting, laxatives, diuretics, and even exercise and begin to lose essential nutrients from their body. A negative balance can be created in this manner, such as protein or vitamin/mineral deficiencies.

The colon, liver/gallbladder, kidney and lymphatic system are the main organs and systems the body uses to detoxify. All should remain clean and healthy throughout our lives. It is important to remember that everybody is biologically individual and must consider all aspects of ones particular health needs and conditions. There are many detoxification programs and products on the market today. I caution you not to consider taking these products or doing an intense cleanse without the supervision of a qualified health care professional. In the past 20 years I have developed various cleansing programs designed for individual needs. Spring and autumn are usually the best time of the year to cleanse the body. This spring I will be offering my spring-cleaning specials. Be sure to contact my office for further information.