

Lifestyle Habits for Healthy Detoxification

Diet Tips

- 1) **Eat foods daily that provide nutrients that support the detoxification pathways in your liver, kidneys and colon.**
 - a. **Organic leafy greens:** 1 – 2 cups a day
 - b. **Cruciferous vegetables** (broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, Brussels sprouts, etc.): 1 – 2 cups a day
 - c. **Sulfur foods:** eggs, onions and garlic (a few cloves a day)
 - d. **Other brightly colored detox vegetables and fruits:** 2 – 3 cups a day
- 2) **Drink lots of water (8 – 12 cups) daily** to flush out transformed toxins and waste products through urine. (Drink the number of ounces that equals at least ½ your body weight.)
- 3) **Eat high quality plant or lean animal proteins at every meal.** Amino acids are necessary for both phases of the liver detoxification. Also, transformed toxins are escorted out of the body by protein molecules.

Toxins are stored in fat cells (ours and those of the animals we eat) so be sure to choose clean, lean protein sources. Either buy organic meats and dairy products or if you must eat conventional sources, choose the leanest cuts of meat you can find and buy fat free dairy products. You don't want to be eating the toxins the animal ate.

Important Note: Some “Detox Plans” on the internet recommend eating or drinking only vegetables and fruits for detox. **This is poor advice!** Healthy detoxification requires amino acids, the building blocks of protein.

- 4) **Enjoy 1 – 2 cups of green or black teas daily.** These teas provide phytonutrients like EGCG and other catechins that help liver enzymes do their jobs.
- 5) **Eat adequate calories every day.** Some internet “Detox Plans” recommend low calorie juice fasts for detoxing. **This is poor advice!** Adequate calories are necessary for your liver to perform all of its detoxification functions.

For healthy detoxification every day, eat a balanced diet with adequate calories. If weight loss is your goal, avoid severe calorie-restricted diets. A nutrient rich eating plan and slight calorie reduction coupled with increased exercise will provide a healthy environment for weight loss and good detoxification.

Remember, toxins are stored in our fat cells. If you lose a large amount of fat quickly, you may dump a lot of toxins into your blood stream. If you are not detoxing well due to insufficient calories, your weight loss plan could make you sick.

Lifestyle Tips

1) **Sweat regularly.**

- a. Perform sweaty exercise regularly (preferably daily) to release toxins through your skin.
- b. Enjoy a visit to a steam room a few times a week to encourage toxins out of your body through your sweat. Drink 1 – 2 cups of water before and after your steam bath. Shower afterwards.
- c. Soak in an Epsom salt bath 2 – 3 times a week or nightly to help remove toxins. An Epsom salt bath can also help soothe sore muscles as well as give your body a dose of valuable magnesium from the Epsom salt. Your body will give up sweat and toxins and take up the magnesium.

i. **Recipe for an Epsom salt bath**

Dissolve 2 cups Epsom salt, 1 cup baking soda and 10 drops lavender oil in bath water as hot as you can tolerate. Soak for 20 minutes just before bed.

Note: If all you have is Epsom salt that will work fine.
(Source: Mark Hyman, MD, *Ultra Simple Diet*, 2007)

- 2) **Have regular bowel movements** once or twice a day to rid your body of toxins in solid waste. A diet high in plant foods as well as lots of fluids daily will provide necessary components for daily bowel movements.
- 3) **Do not drink alcohol while taking acetaminophen (ex. Tylenol®).** They compete for the same detoxifying enzymes which can overburden specific steps in Phase 1 or Phase 2 detoxification impairing the liver's ability to handle the load of exposure.
- 4) **Sleep 6 – 8 hours every night.** Much of our liver detoxification occurs while we are sleeping. Our bodies need adequate rest to properly detox. Aim for 6 – 8 hours of quality sleep every night.

Sources:

Institute for Functional Medicine: *Textbook of Functional Medicine*, July 2006.

Institute for Functional Medicine: *Clinical Nutrition: A Functional Approach*, 2nd Edition, 2004.

Hyman, Mark, MD, *The Ultra Mind Solution*, 2009.

Dietitians in Integrative and Functional Medicine, *The Integrative RD*, Spring 2012