

## Spring Cleaning for your Body



We're just weeks away from the colorful foliage, blossoming flowers and warmth of summer. Spring is traditionally a time for cleaning house, and it's also a good time to get rid of our "toxic baggage" from the winter.

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Spring is a time of change

In wintertime, we usually put on a few pounds and indulge over the December holidays. Stress, poor eating habits and pollutants from the air, water and soil along with automobile exhaust, pesticides, cigarette smoking and many other chemicals, all contribute to our body's accumulation of toxic baggage. Spring is a good time to sort through that baggage and cleanse the body for the summer months. Spring is a natural time of change, why not change our lifestyle habits as well?

Spring cleanup

Throughout your detoxification process, it is important to follow recommendations that address what you're eating and you must take the supportive nutrients to help you eliminate toxins from your body. You should also be exercising regularly, however, throughout your detox you may want to slow your exercise routine as your body will need more energy for spring cleaning.

Step 1: Eat a simple hypoallergenic diet

For seven days, eat a clean and hypoallergenic diet. Certain foods, such as wheat and dairy, may cause food sensitivities or allergies. By eating a diet low in allergenic foods, you will give your body a break so that it may focus on cleaning up old baggage. Below you'll find a list of foods to include in your seven-day detox diet and a list of foods to avoid.

Foods to include

- Brown rice, preferably organic (basmati is tastiest)
- Fresh vegetables, raw or lightly steamed (except corn)
- Fresh fruits, preferably organic (except oranges and orange juice)
- Condiments, such as fresh garlic, fresh ginger, cayenne pepper and olive oil
- Lentils, sesame seeds and hummus
- Cold-water fish, such as pacific salmon, halibut and mackerel
- Free-range organic chicken
- Tofu and tempeh
- Green tea and herbal teas

Foods to avoid

- Meat
- Dairy
- All wheat products
- All refined and processed foods, such as white bread, cold cuts
- Salt
- Corn
- Oranges and orange juice
- Absolutely no shellfish (shrimp, oysters, scallops, clams, lobster, etc.) or catfish
- Canned fruits or vegetables
- Coffee and tea
- Alcohol
- Sweets, such as chocolate, candies, cakes, soft drinks

#### Step 2: Take supplements to help you detoxify

There are a number of vitamins and supplements that help to detoxify the body. The main organs of detoxification are the liver, the kidneys, the skin and the lungs. Here are a few supplements to support your organs of detoxification throughout this process.

**Milk thistle:** Studies have shown that milk thistle helps the liver return to a healthy state once a person stops drinking alcohol. Milk thistle has been used to treat and as a prophylaxis against liver damage induced by toxins and drugs.

**Dandelion leaves** contain bitter compounds that help increase bile production in the gallbladder and bile flow from the liver. The liver eliminates toxins from the body by making them soluble and secreting them in bile. By increasing bile flow and production, you encourage the liver to dump more toxins out of the body.

**Flaxseed:** To ensure toxins are eliminated from the body, it is important to have regular bowel habits.

Flaxseed, preferably ground, is an excellent source of fiber for maintaining bowel regularity.

**Amino acids:** There are a number of amino acids that help the liver process toxins. N-acetyl-cysteine (NAC) is a precursor to glutathione which is involved in the detoxification of heavy metals, solvents and pesticides. Methionine helps detoxify certain drugs, food additives and toxins from intestinal bacteria.

**Antioxidants:** Vitamin C, beta-carotene and vitamin E protect the liver from damage.

**Vitamins and minerals:** B vitamins, calcium, magnesium, zinc and other trace minerals are critical in the elimination of heavy metals and other toxins in the body.

#### Step 3: Drink water

Drink water—lots of water—to help your kidneys flush toxins from your body. A good rule is to drink half of your body weight in ounces of water per day. For example, a 160 lb. person should drink 80 ounces of water (10 glasses) per day. Be sure to drink clean, filtered water.

#### Step 4: Breathe deeply

To help your lungs expel carbon dioxide, take deep, full breaths of air throughout the day. Deep breathing exercises reduce stress, lower blood pressure and aid in the detoxification process.

#### Step 5: Have fun

Once you've completed your detox, you'll feel great. Enjoy the process and pat yourself on the back for your discipline and for taking responsibility for your health.