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WAGING WAR ON TOXINS

CLEANSING SUPPORTS THE BODY

By Lisa Moore

Each day you are assaulted by hundreds of toxins: in food, water, drugs, environmental and electromagnetic pollution, cleaning and beauty products, paints, pesticides and much more. Where do these harmful contaminants go once they enter your body?

They are processed via the liver, skin, lungs, kidneys and the colon. Normally the body's natural detoxification system does an effective job, but with continual intake of toxic substances, the input rate will at times exceed the output rate. Once the body has accumulated an overwhelming amount of toxins, it will display symptoms that it's being taxed.

An accumulation of toxins can exhibit a wide array of maladies -poor digestion, weight gain, constipation, skin problems, halitosis, allergies, headaches, fatigue, frequent colds, IBS and insomnia and even degenerative and autoimmune diseases. In his book *Spontaneous Healing*, Dr. Andrew Weil expressed his concern about toxic overload.

"Whether energetic or material, toxins can damage DNA, which contains the information needed for spontaneous healing; disrupt the biological controls on which the healing system depends; weaken defenses; and promote the

development of cancer that already represents failures of healing by the time they make themselves known."

Since there is no way to completely avoid toxins, cleansing can help support the natural detoxification system when it is overburdened. Cleansing, or detoxification programs, can be as simple as eliminating toxic foods from the diet or as intense as spending a few weeks at an Ayurvedic retreat for purification techniques like herbal oil massages, steam treatments and enemas. It's best to consider what state your physical and mental health is in and then determine what level of detoxification would be best.

Dr. Jon Ritz, a naturopathic physician at Carolinas Natural Health Center, assists people through detoxification programs. He says people can support the natural processes of elimination by drinking spring water, avoiding certain foods, fresh vegetable juicing, mindfulness practice, herbal teas and colonics. He notes that sometimes people may feel worse before they feel better during a cleanse.

"This is a sign that the body's metabolism has shifted and that toxins have been released from tissues into the bloodstream. If people feel worse after beginning a cleanse, this is a sign that they need to rest, drink more spring water, and

Essentially, cleansing is the avoidance of toxins and support of natural processes of eliminations

It's like what you do for your car every 3,000 miles - give it an oil change. We all need to keep our filters clean.

support elimination. Don't stop. Rather, buckle down and continue. Most people will generally feel better soon."

Elle Palmer leads groups through Three Weeks to Wellness programs in which participants eat plant-based foods and avoid meat, dairy, sugar, gluten, alcohol and caffeine. The key ingredient of the program is support – an important factor since completing a cleanse can be challenging.

A group grocery trip helps everyone prepare and learn to decipher food labels. Daily emails provide inspirational videos and links to articles. Weekly potlucks, a Q & A with a medical doctor, cooking classes and a facebook page for sharing struggles, successes, or recipes makes staying on the plan easier. People are often amazed at their accomplishments.

"The average cholesterol drop is about 25 points. People that normally sneeze all through the pollen season report that they had no allergy symptoms during the cleanse. The most common results are increased energy and clarity, sleeping like a baby, weight loss and aches and pains disappearing," says Palmer.

It's important to do a cleanse when you have time to slow down and rest. Ease into it and ease out of it, never starting or stopping abruptly. A cleanse should typically last about twice as long as the intensive portion. If you are planning on doing an intensive detoxification program, seek the guidance of an experienced practitioner.

Cleanses can be done a few times a year to help you feel and better and to assist the body's organs in functioning more efficiently. However, Ritz encourages people to be more mindful of purification on a regular basis.

"Every day is a cleanse, remember that. Think of every day as an opportunity to avoid toxins, to seek out nutrition, to support elimination and to recuperate."

Dr. Ritz can be reached at drritz@carolinasnaturalhealth.com or 704-708-4404 and Elle Palmer can be contacted at palmer1626@yahoo.com or 704-906-6646.

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