NUTRITION

Spring Cleansing for Health and Vitality

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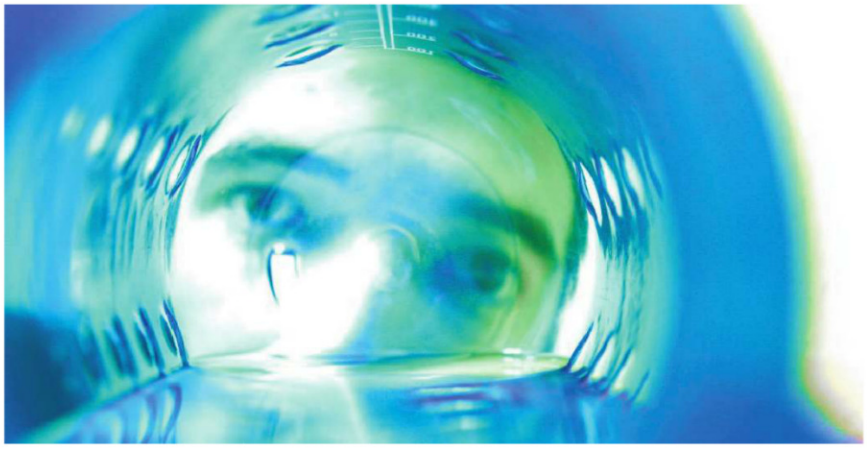
Can you feel it? Spring is almost in the air. After long winters, our bodies want to cleanse and rejuvenate themselves to prepare for the new season. Cleansing is a means of restoring health, improving energy, supporting metabolism and eliminating toxins from our bodies.

Modern technology has increased our exposure to harmful chemicals which were foreign to our ancestors. These are hidden in our food, air, water, cosmetics and everything we consume or use.

How does this affect us as women? The delicate balance of our hormonal system is very sensitive to the environment around us. Nutrition, sleep, exercise and stress all impact our hormonal cycles. Environmental toxicity also has a powerful impact. For example, some plastic residues and pesticides are known endocrine disruptors called xenoestrogens. This means they mimic our own natural hormones causing disruption of our hormonal cycles.

Worse than causing unhappy hormones, environmental toxicity affects babies during pregnancy. Hundreds of harmful chemicals are now found in umbilical cords of newborn infants. Many of these are known carcinogens which are toxic to the brain and nervous system. We are transferring our toxic burden to our children at the moment we give them life. The question is no longer if we are toxic – it is how toxic are we?

Although this is a scary reality, we cannot isolate ourselves from these poisons. But with knowledge and awareness, we can minimize their toxic effects. We can reduce our exposure by making better choices about what goes into or onto our bodies, which will help support our natural capacity to detoxify. Toxic burden is the accumulation of harmful environmental substances in our body. Here are tips to decrease our toxic burden:



CHOOSE LOCAL AND ORGANIC FOOD

Avoid food sprayed with pesticides and herbicides. If you can not buy all organic, avoid the Environmental Working Group (EWG) Dirty Dozen; those foods found to have the most chemical residue on them – peaches, apples, sweet bell peppers, celery, nectarines, strawberries, cherries, pears, imported grapes, spinach, lettuce, potatoes.

AVOID PLASTIC

Avoid plastic water bottles. Store food in glass containers and never microwave food in plastic. To find out about the full toxic spectrum of plastic, read *Slow Death By Rubber Duck* by R. Smith & B Lourie.

PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS

While our skin is the barrier that separates us from the world, many toxins are fat soluble meaning they are absorbed through skin. Do you know what is in your personal care products? Find out by visiting Skin Deep Cosmetics Database – ewg.org/skindeep.

AVOID NON-STICK KITCHENWARE

These contain a compound called perfluorooctanoic acid which disrupt our hormonal and reproductive systems. Use cast iron or non-coated kitchenware instead.

AVOID HARMFUL CHEMICAL CLEANERS

Choose natural cleansers or make your own with vinegar, baking soda & tea tree oil.

Here are tips to support gentle and healthy detoxification:

NUTRITION

Choose a whole food diet and avoid processed foods. Bitter greens such as endive, radicchio, dandelion, and mustard greens are particularly beneficial for cleansing. Cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage, kale, collard greens, Brussels sprouts, also support detoxification pathways in the liver. Choose meat and dairy products that are free of antibiotics and hormones. Choose fresh, cold water fish rather than farmed or canned fish. Fibre helps eliminate contaminates from the body. Good examples are vegetables, whole grains, ground flax seeds.

CAFFEINE & WATER

Increase green tea intake which supports detoxification and drink water. Aim for around 2 litres per day. Try drinking fresh lemon water upon waking in the morning to promote liver health.

DIGESTIVE HEALTH

Digestion is our main route of elimination and a healthy digestive system with regular bowel movements is essential. Keep your body active promotes cellular detoxification. A whole food diet rich in fibre, regular exercise, stress management and probiotic cultures will help you keep regular.

DETOXIFICATION PROGRAMS

The main detoxification organs are the liver, kidneys and bowels. A detoxification program helps these organs eliminate stored toxins from the body. Ask your natural healthcare professional to design a program for you. Saunas promote detoxification of the heavy metals and organic chemicals stored in fat cells, while supporting your metabolism.

Cleansing can be about more than just reducing metabolic toxicity. We can also detoxify on an emotional level by releasing old thought patterns and emotions that are no longer serving us. Emotional detoxification can be a process of deeply letting go and accepting ourselves just as we are. Finding ways to manage stress and creating time for self care is helpful during this process. Yoga, deep breathing and meditation, even writing in a journal, will all help your mental detoxification.

An ongoing planned effort to decrease our toxic burden helps our physical and emotional selves. Most people report increased energy and vitality, emotional wellbeing and mental clarity, metabolic rate and weight loss, along with less inflammation and symptoms of chronic illness.

With knowledge, we can be empowered to make healthier choices for ourselves and our families. By being aware of what enters our body and supporting our ability to cleanse physically and emotionally, we can all enjoy better health and wellbeing.

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