

Detoxifying Your Body

By Teresa Keast BPhEd/BSc (Nutrition)

Below are a few guidelines to follow for safe effective health enhancing detoxification



- Dehydration places every cell in the body under stress, especially the cells in the organs that detoxify the body like the liver, kidneys, digestive system, lungs and lymphatic system.
- If you start to detox the body and your cells are dehydrated you will add to the toxic load your body has to process and this is why you can feel terrible when you start to change your diet.
- Our body is 70-80% water, we often ignore our thirst or confuse thirst with hunger. Once you are experiencing thirst you are already 3-4% dehydrated, enough to impair concentration and physical performance.
- The very first thing you must do to help your body to detoxify is drink plenty of water, herbal teas and drinks that do not contain sugar, caffeine or alcohol. Ideally 8-10 big glasses per day or until your urine is colourless. This aids the function of the liver, kidneys, digestive system and skin in their continual detoxification of the body.
- Alcohol dehydrates the body and causes magnesium to be lost from the cell. Magnesium is involved in numerous reactions in the body many to do with our energy levels and how good we feel. We often drink alcohol as a quick fix, to relax us, reduce stress and give us that feel good factor, when in the longer term it has the opposite effect.
- Caffeine dehydrates the body and mimics the effects of stress. It depletes the body of several essential nutrients and contributes to feelings of tiredness, irritability and restlessness. Caffeine intake should be reduced gradually to avoid withdrawal symptoms of headaches and irritability. Take care with consuming caffeine rich energy drinks, and warn your teenagers to moderate their intake of these drinks, as they severely dehydrate the body and can lead to blood sugar problems and behavioural and personality changes. Combined with alcohol they can lead to serious health states.

- Our lungs remove many toxins from the body, by breathing properly and fully using all of your lungs you help to de-stress your body, remove harmful gases and aid the detox process. Yoga and meditation can teach you how to breathe. Ideally breathe from the belly with an expansion of the belly as the lungs fill with air and then the abdomen is gently drawn back toward the spine as you breathe out. We often chest breathe in times of stress, by breathing deeply and slowly we can significantly reduce our negative experience of stress and feel calm and able to cope with the situation at hand. By slowing the breathing we slow our thoughts and if we focus on our breathing thoughts will naturally become more positive.

- Stress lasting more than two weeks initiates the cortisol response in your body, which contributes to an increase in body fat around the midriff and dehydrates and depresses your brain function affecting your ability to think clearly and make good decisions.

It causes an increase in the acidity of your body. More about this further on.

- Stress also dehydrates your body placing it under more stress. This negative cycle causes much of the toxicity in our body. By finding ways to relax regularly, changing our behaviours and the way we live to decrease the negative stress in our life we automatically detoxify our cells.

- Stress has a negative affect on digestion. If we eat in a stressful environment we do not absorb as many nutrients from the food we are eating. We now know that 80% of our immune system is found in the gut, helping to explain why stress depresses our immune system.

- Stress is experienced when we perceive a threat. Much of our stress is caused by our habitual way of thinking and viewing the world. Is the glass half empty or half full? We worry unnecessarily before there is any real threat, we set ourselves up to fail through unrealistic expectations, we self doubt and allow others to erode our self esteem. These thought patterns all erode our vital energy which further depletes the body's ability to cope. Living in the moment, with regular practise of yoga and meditation/relaxation will change the way you habitually think and view the world, and reduce your experience of stress.

- The cell membrane of every cell in our body is made up of essential fatty acids, if your diet is low in these omega 3 or omega 6 fatty acids and too high in saturated fats then the cell membrane also becomes too high in saturated fats and this affects the cells ability to absorb nutrients, vitamins and minerals, to eliminate waste products and toxins and to maintain good health. In general our intake of essential fatty acids has decreased by 80% as we have responded to the message to reduce our fat intake and as we eat more

processed foods. We have cut down on the good fats in oils, nuts, seeds, oily fish and avocados. Research has linked low efa intakes with poor concentration and hyperactivity in children. It contributes to many inflammatory diseases such as eczema, asthma, arthritis and can cause an under functioning of the thyroid gland lowering our metabolic rate contributing to weight gain and lethargy. It contributes to pmt and hormone imbalance. We used to get adequate amounts of omega 3 fatty acids from milk when cows fed on predominantly grass, not grains.

- It is now known that our body cells absorb light that can be converted to energy. This is why we feel energised by the sunshine and need natural light to feel well. When the cell membrane is rich in essential fatty acids we can do this more efficiently. When we lack these fats our cells are not able to function optimally and we experience fatigue, and depression, this contributes to the increased lethargy experienced by many in the winter months.

- Refined sugar causes several minerals to be lost from the body, such as magnesium and potassium. It depresses the immune system.

- Refined sugar is digested and absorbed too quickly causing the blood glucose levels to rise dangerously. In response the body releases a large dose of insulin which causes the sugar to be stored as body fat rather than glucagon in the muscles and liver. Foods that cause this insulin response are called high glycaemic index carbohydrates. Following the blood sugar high we experience a blood sugar low which causes hunger, negative mood and a desire for more sweet foods. This contributes to weight gain, pmt, and mood cycles. Caffeine accentuates this affect.

- Refined Sugar causes an increase in the acidity of the body. It contributes to body fat gain and dehydration of the body. Cutting down on refined sugar and substituting fruit and low glycaemic index foods will help to detoxify the body and improve vitality and energy levels.

Click here for a comprehensive list of the glycaemic index of various forms of carbohydrate.

- Salt (sodium chloride) dehydrates the body by causing water to follow sodium into the cell, this causes potassium to be lost from the cell. Then calcium which should remain in the blood stream and the bones is drawn into the cell instead and magnesium is lost. These alterations in the minerals at the cellular level create an acidic environment in the cell and a build-up of toxins. This eventually leads to dis-ease or disease. All processed foods contain a lot of salt. By gradually reducing your salt intake and eating fresh potassium rich fruits and vegetables you can help to create a naturally alkaline cell environment enabling every cell in your body to function healthily and detox

naturally. Using natural sea salt or himalayan crystal salt, instead of sodium chloride is of benefit to the body and promotes cellular health and alkalinity. We need salt every day, but the right kind. It is important in replacing electrolyte balance especially following sweating or vomiting.

- We were never designed to eat a diet with so much wheat. This imbalance contributes to the build-up of acidity in the body. By introducing a variety of grains into your diet you automatically help the body to detoxify. Oats, rye, barley, millet, sprouted wheat and quinoa are some healthy alternatives.

- Dairy products are beneficial sources of calcium, magnesium, phosphorous and protein. However in the west, we tend to rely on them too much. In some people they are poorly digested causing intolerance and contribute to increased mucus in the body and an increase in acidity of the body. By introducing non-dairy sources of milk such as rice or almond milk or a little soya milk we help the body to alkalise and detoxify naturally. Orange juice, sesame seeds, cashew nuts, broccoli and oily fish bones are good alternative sources of calcium, magnesium and phosphorus.

- If your liver is overloaded due to environmental toxins as well as a poor diet you can help support your liver by taking a supplement of milk thistle, by drinking dandelion or nettle tea or dandelion coffee, or eating artichoke, garlic, onions, the cabbage family of vegetables (broccoli, cauliflower, brussel sprouts), lemons, or any brightly coloured vegetables (tomatoes, apricots, peppers, blueberries or carrots). A drink made with cider vinegar, honey and hot water is also beneficial. If you are able to make your own juice a delicious liver boost is a mixture of carrots, apples, celery with some fresh ginger.

- Your body continually works to maintain the healthy acid/alkaline balance in your cells, excess acid is released into the lymph which flows into the blood stream to be eliminated with the bile in the faeces. By eating a fibre rich diet with plenty of fruit and vegetables you aid this process. Skin brushing, regular massage and regular exercise aid both the lymphatic drainage and healthy elimination. They also stimulate the immune system.

- Many people enjoy the revitalising and detoxifying benefits of adding organic barley grass or wheat grass to their diet in the form of a powder added to juice or smoothies. These work as powerful antioxidants (antiageing, anticancer, detoxifying), that contain a wealth of vital vitamins, minerals as well as enzymes and other active compounds that promote good health. These are available online.

- Choosing organic produce naturally reduces the toxins your body is exposed to because of the controlled growing and harvesting conditions. If you can buy

local organic produce the food will naturally contain more vitamins and minerals than food that has travelled or been stored for any length of time. Organic food tastes better and has a higher vibrational level of energy. Food like our cells and our bodies contains an energy field surrounding it that can have a higher or lower vibration. This vibratory energy of food is only just been researched by science and has a significant effect on the health benefits of that particular food for us. Foods with higher vibration raise our cellular and therefore our whole body's energy vibration in the same way that yoga or meditation and positive thoughts and laughter raise our body's energy field vibration. Ill health is often a result of a lower or weakened energy field. Cooking and processing food can lower its vibrational energy, hence the reason many people advocate a diet containing more raw food. Vegetarian foods tend to have higher vibrations, food cooked in the microwave tends to have a much lower vibration. Juicing fresh fruit and vegetables is ideal.

- When foods are metabolised the end products are either acidic or alkaline. The body cell functions ideally in an alkaline environment and acids are harder for the body to eliminate. Ideally we want to aim for a diet that is 70% alkaline forming foods and 30% acid forming foods. Remember both are needed for good health it is the proportions that are the key.

In general acid forming foods are meat, fish, bread, wheat pasta, cheese, butter, chocolate, cocoa, tea, coffee, soya products, rice, oats, lentils and eggs. Alkaline forming foods include most vegetables, fruit and berries, sprouts, buckwheat and millet pasta, quinoa, milk, sesame seeds, cashew nuts, almond milk, carob, and herbal teas.

***Food nourishes your Body, Mind and Soul
Make loving healthy Choices***

