

# how detox works

## The Organs Of Detoxification

When talking detox, people typically think about the liver, which is the body's primary organ of detoxification. But, our bodies are designed to detox via multiple pathways, including the skin, the kidneys, and the colon, says Russell Jaffe, MD, PhD. The skin, the body's largest organ of detoxification, absorbs the toxins you put on it and eliminates them through sweat. Your kidneys filter your blood and excrete toxins through your urine, and the colon is the "end of the line" where the toxins that are metabolized within the body are packaged up with fiber and sent out in the form of waste #2.

If the "exit doors" are blocked, such as when you're constipated, there's nowhere for the toxins to go but back inside, says Dr. Jaffe. This is why, with any attempt at detoxification, you need to make sure you're getting the fiber and water needed to flush out your system.

## The Necessary Nutrients

"Detoxification is a nutrient-dependent process," says Alisa Vitti, founder of FLO Living and author of *WomanCode: Perfect Your Cycle, Amplify Your Fertility, Supercharge Your Sex Drive, and Become a Power Source*. "Detoxing the wrong way can actually wind up doing more harm than good," she says, pointing out that many of the popular juice-based or starvation-geared "cleanses" lack the nutrients required to carry out the three-phase process detoxification requires.

## The Most Common Ways to Detox

There are many ways to do a detox diet, ranging from total starvation fasts and juicing to simpler food modifications.

Most detox diets involve at least one of the following (1):

- Fasting for 1-3 days.
- Drinking fresh fruit and vegetable juices, smoothies, water and tea.
- Drinking only specific liquids, such as salted water or lemon juice.
- Eliminating foods high in heavy metals, contaminants and allergens.
- Taking supplements or herbs.
- Avoiding all allergenic foods, and then slowly reintroducing them.
- Using laxatives, colon cleanses or enemas.
- Exercising regularly.
- Completely eliminating alcohol, coffee, cigarettes and refined sugar.

## Do Detox Diets Work?

Some people report feeling more focused and energetic during and after detox diets.

However, this improved well-being may simply be due to eliminating processed foods, alcohol and other unhealthy substances from your diet.

You may also be getting vitamins and minerals that were lacking before.

## Detox Diets and Weight Loss

Currently, very few scientific studies have investigated the effectiveness of detox diets for losing weight.

While some people may lose a lot of weight quickly, this seems to be due to loss of fluid and carb stores, rather than fat. This weight is therefore usually regained quickly once you start eating normally again.

The weight loss effects of one detox diet, called the "lemon detox diet," was studied recently in overweight Korean women. It involves consuming only a mixture of organic maple or palm syrups and lemon juice for 7 days.

## How do you know if you need to detoxify?

Consult your healthcare practitioner if you have questions about whether detoxing is right for you.

Today, with more toxins in the environment than ever, "it's critical to detox," says Linda Page, N.D., Ph.D., the author of *Detoxification: Programs to Cleanse, Purify and Renew*. Page recommends detoxing for symptoms such as:

- Unexplained fatigue
- Sluggish elimination
- Irritated skin
- Allergies
- Low-grade infection
- Puffy eyes or bags under the eyes
- Bloating
- Menstrual problems
- Mental confusion

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