Improve Your Mood
Need a Chiropractor?
Natural Smile Brighteners
I grew up in the country. When my friends and I came in from splashing in the frog pond, we dropped off our boots in the mud room and, on Mom’s orders, marched directly to the big stone sink to wash with soap and water. Later, when I attended an urban university that boasted a student body more than three times the population of my hometown, I made a point to clean up after sloshing through soot-black snow or riding public transit. That’s the way I perceived it: The world may be a dirty place, but grime washes off with just a little effort.

I failed to consider the insidious effect of invisible chemical toxins in my environment. Many potentially toxic substances are manmade. Considered safe by the government until the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proves otherwise, these molecules are often described by their manufacturers as harmless in small amounts. But modern life exposes us to small doses many times over, with our cells playing host to a roiling cocktail of chemicals from different sources. The resulting “body burden” of toxins we’ve accumulated adds up to 400 to 800 chemicals at any given time, says Gaetano Morello, ND.

For some people, the exposures we can’t control are major factors in the choice to begin an internal cleanse. “The chemical bombardment that assaults our bodies . . . is the greatest threat we face,” writes Dr. Morello in Whole Body Cleansing. If you’re concerned about your toxic load, talk with a healthcare provider about a detox program that’s right for you.

Here are just four everyday examples of how toxins come to occupy our bodies.

Dirty Secret No. 1
After a shower, you moisturize your face and body, dress, and apply a light layer of makeup. Then it’s out the door. Maybe you’re aware that conventional shampoo, soap, lotion, and cosmetics often contain phthalates, chemicals that soften plastics. Phthalates are endocrine disruptors that interfere with the normal development of children’s reproductive systems. They’ve also been linked to the feminization of male rodents in studies. But even if you’ve replaced each of your beauty products with natural, phthalate-free products, you may not be in the clear: This chemical is frequently used to make shower curtains.

Dirty Secret No. 2
Your drive to work takes 25 minutes—about the national average. More than 75 percent of commuters drive solo, according to new data from the census bureau. But drivers, bikers, passengers, and those who walk to work or school all share the same air. Auto exhaust, just one contributor to air pollution, contains carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulphur dioxide, benzene, formaldehyde, lead, and tiny particles of matter that can lodge in the lungs. And despite this country’s strides toward cleaner air, EPA estimates that 124 million Americans live in areas with air pollution levels above acceptable levels.
Colon Cleansing: The Real Story

Detoxification has been a vital part of Eastern medicine since ancient times, and today countless health-conscious people view it as the fast track to wellness and vitality. However, popular detox programs can do more harm than good if they don’t follow traditional holistic principles.

All too often, detox programs seek a quick fix by focusing on colon purging, using intense cleanses and colonics. Although these can be beneficial, they can also cause damage. A singular focus on bowel cleansing doesn’t address the problem of toxins stored within organs and tissues outside the colon, or chronic health issues related to toxicity. Isolated colon cleansing can weaken your system and cause a healing crisis, where toxins are stuck in transit or rapidly recirculated and reabsorbed.

In contrast, traditional Chinese medicine teaches us the steps to follow for optimal cleansing and rejuvenation. The natural rhythms and cycles of all our detoxification organs and systems must be adhered to, and complications such as oxidative stress, vital energy depletion, and toxin reabsorption must be strategically prevented.

For lasting results, this is what I recommend: Always start detox gradually, with a cleansing and nourishing diet. Supplement with natural ingredients such as medicinal mushrooms, modified citrus pectin, and sodium alginates, which gently yet effectively clear toxins from the digestive tract and the circulatory system. Then, slowly advance to more thorough detoxification, using compounds such as sulfured amino acids, milk thistle, cilantro, goldenrod, Oregon grape root, Chinese similax, dandelion leaf, and other botanicals and nutrients.

While bowel cleanses can be beneficial—many people swear by them—a holistic program helps achieve long-term success. As an integrative physician, I have seen truly holistic detoxification improve the lives of so many people, usually without the need for colonics, enemas, or harsh purges. By harmonizing our cleansing programs with our own natural detox rhythms, rather than using abrasive quick fixes, we can experience more comfortable and complete detoxification for true long-term healing and vitality.

—Isaac Eliaz, MD, MS, LAc

Isaac Eliaz, MD, MS, LAc, integrates his background in Western medicine with extensive knowledge of traditional Chinese, Tibetan, Ayurvedic, homeopathic, and complementary medical systems. He is a respected researcher, product formulator, clinical practitioner, author, and lecturer. Dr. Eliaz is a leading expert in the field of modified citrus pectin research. For more information, visit www.dreliaz.org.