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Detox Advice
CAM and Cancer
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Allergy Relief



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Meet the experts

Carol Spooner, NMD, BCN, is a licensed naturopathic medical doctor in Phoenix, AZ, where she uses integrative and functional medicine to treat patients with conditions including chronic disease and pain, high blood pressure or cholesterol, menopausal issues, and allergies. An herbalist for more than two dozen years, she has developed many of her own formulas and has been certified in several specialties, including neurofeedback.

Isaac Eliaz, MD, LAc, is a respected author, lecturer, researcher, product formulator, and clinical practitioner. He has been a pioneer in the field of integrative medicine since the early 1980s. Dr. Eliaz is a frequent lecturer regarding integrative medical approaches to health, immune enhancement, and cancer prevention and treatment.

ready to detox?

Experts reveal what you need to know

Remedies: Could you explain the term detoxification?

Dr. Eliaz: Physical detoxification is our body's multistep process of capturing and removing harmful invaders, pollutants, heavy metals, and everyday metabolic wastes. Detoxification is part of normal metabolic function, but due to the many pollutants in our everyday environments, we often need additional support in the form of diet, supplementation, and detoxification treatments to keep harmful toxins and heavy metals from accumulating deep within our tissues and organs.

The body's natural detoxification process follows a specific cycle of circulation between organ systems. This is what's known as the "detox cycle," with two distinct phases: *discharge* and *elimination*. Organs and tissues first discharge toxins into the circulatory system; they are eventually eliminated by our sweat, breath, urine, and bowel movements. If the burden of discharged toxins into our circulation is manageable, and our elimination channels are supported to function efficiently, we can successfully cleanse with little or no side effects.

Remedies: What are some common reasons that people choose to start a detoxification program?

Dr. Spooner: People interested in longevity will often opt to detox. Compare cleanse or detox programs to fluid changes and detail work inside a car. The life of a car engine can be extended through maintenance. Some chronic diseases can be improved by a cleanse and long-term lifestyle changes.

Liver and kidney cleanses, for example, can help improve filtering, digestion, and sugar and cholesterol management, reduce pain, and address a myriad of other health issues. Certain detoxification programs can reduce blood pressure. Weight loss is another common motivation to start a detox.

Remedies: Is detox useful for everybody? Or is it more important for some people than others?

Dr. Eliaz: Gentle yet thorough detoxification can benefit nearly everyone, as we've all been exposed to pollutants in our environment to some degree or another. However, people with illnesses such as chronic fatigue, autoimmune disease, cardiovascular diseases, or autism, among others, often have higher levels



of toxins and heavy metals such as lead, mercury, arsenic, or pesticides in their bodies which can contribute to the aggravation of their condition. For these people, the gentle removal of toxins with appropriate methods can be crucial in aiding a positive clinical outcome.

Dr. Spooner: Detoxification is helpful for almost anyone. Those who take medications or have been diagnosed with health conditions would be best served by having an ND/NMD, MD, or DO guide the detox choice. A licensed naturopathic doctor receives training on several detoxification programs, so would likely be able to select the perfect program. For example, older adults may require a gentle program or medical supervision during internal cleansing. And detox is not appropriate during pregnancy.

Remedies: In your opinion, what are a few of the most effective forms of internal cleansing?

Dr. Eliaz: With any detoxification, it is important to move gently and gradually. So one of the most essential first steps is to have a system in place to begin cleansing the blood and

digestive system of circulating toxins, and continue this process throughout the entire detox program. It is important to cleanse the blood *without* causing the organs to discharge too much all at once, while preventing reabsorption of toxins through the digestive system. For this reason, I highly recommend natural chelation with a modified citrus pectin/modified alginate supplement, because it gently and systemically purifies the blood, tissues, and eventually the organs by drawing toxins and heavy metals and binding to them to be excreted, thus preventing reabsorption. The modified citrus pectin/modified alginate complex does not remove essential minerals from the body, and it has been researched for its effectiveness and safety.

After a minimum one month of cleansing with a modified citrus pectin/modified alginate complex, I recommend progressing to a more complete detoxification supplement that contains a number of natural sulfur-containing compounds such as NAC, MSM, and lipoic acid together with botanicals such as cilantro, garlic, milk thistle, and ginkgo, which have specific affinities for different

tissues and organs. This type of formula will bring vital energy and support to the organs of elimination, while simultaneously removing deeply stored toxins and heavy metals to complete the detoxification process.

Another important nutritional adjunct is a high-quality medicinal mushroom formula. Medicinal mushrooms act like sponges, traveling to hard-to-reach areas of the body to mop up toxins and pathogens.

Dr. Spooner: Diet changes for the better (such as eliminating junk food, caffeine, and conventionally grown food) are generally safe for anyone. So is regular, gentle exercise like walking, water aerobics, or dancing.

Which specific detox techniques are safe and effective varies from individual to individual. For this reason, I caution anyone with impaired health to consult a physician before attempting a cleanse.

Herbs that could be used as part of a detox include milk thistle, beet, carrot, neem, cranberry, hibiscus, psyllium husk, and turmeric, among others. There are many useful detox formulas and packages available in stores. Your local naturo-

pathic doctor will often prefer particular products according to the symptoms you display. Homeopathic remedies, tissue salts, and flower essences can facilitate a cleanse too.

Dr. Eliaz: One treatment modality I highly recommend is the use of an infrared sauna to help detoxify heavy metals via sweat excretion. This type of therapy is valuable in helping reduce toxic body burden, increase circulation and immunity, and boost overall vitality, all of which are essential during detoxification.

Remedies: How does detox feel?

Dr. Spooner: Everyone experiences detoxification differently. Some detoxes can make people feel like they have flu symptoms. This occurs when the elimination organs are not keeping up with the detoxification stimulation. Natural treatments (including homeopathy) can reduce or eliminate these symptoms. Toxins can temporarily change body fluids: urine smells stronger and body odors and bowel movements change, as does stool consistency.

If the diet change involves removal of sugar, cravings may occur. Consuming a bitter-tasting food or drink can reduce the urge for sugar.

Many people report that feelings of strength, clarity, and optimism develop during a detox. Take time to relax, listen to pleasant music, meditate, and cuddle under a blanket. Doing yoga, t'ai chi, or any gentle activity will typically provide emotional support during the cleanse. It is one of the most important times to nurture yourself. ✨

