



Detox: Do's and Don'ts

By: Gary E. Foresman, MD

Section 1: How do I know if I am toxic?

According to every healing system since the beginning of time, if you are in human form, breathing, eating and interacting with unenlightened people, you are – by definition – toxic. This is why all traditional healing systems include a regular, seasonal (every 3-4 months) detoxification as part of its general health-maintenance and disease-prevention program.

The symptoms of toxicity include the general “I just don’t feel good symptoms” that most patients present to their physicians with. These include fatigue, achiness, poor digestion, insomnia or hypersomnia, poor complexion, etc. These symptoms are the “dis-ease” that precede disease. If these symptoms sound like you, then you really need a detox. If they don’t, then detox provides a way of maintaining your good health prior to these types of symptoms arising. Furthermore, detox slows the aging process.

As an aside, you may notice that these symptoms sound a lot like hypothyroidism, chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia and others, which are the “epidemics” of modern society. What America suffers from is epidemic, rampant toxicity.

Section 2: Why do we get toxic?

The big three of the unhealthy lifestyle: too much stress, too little exercise, and a diet high in processed foods - all of which in their unique ways lead to the hallmarks of toxicity – inflammation and oxidative damage. The simplest test to assess someone’s toxicity is the bioimpedance analysis ([BIA](#)). The classic finding of a high ratio of extracellular water to intracellular water provides an objective measure to assess toxicity and furthermore show the results of a detoxification program.

When one considers the range of chemicals found in our homes, food supply and environment, mixed with the general state of malnutrition of an average person, you get the recipe for toxicity. If you have symptoms of toxicity, look carefully, but not obsessively for toxicity in your home. This includes forms of entertainment, the music you listen to, the people you associate with, the smells you surround yourself with, the amount of caring touch that you receive, not just what foods you eat.

Section 3: What is detoxification?

Simply put, it means having an educated system in which you minimize incoming toxins and maximize your body’s ability to “cleanse itself”. Although the most important part of “detoxification” relies on our daily health habits, it remains important for one to

allocate specific times during the year to focus on detox. A simple analogy would be “spring cleaning” – if we don’t take time to get to the deep stuff, it just never gets done.

Let’s cover “fasting” briefly. Fasting, whether a water or juice fast, provides the individual with a uniquely wonderful time to focus on spiritual practices. For people who have done detox on a regular basis, and have no toxicity symptoms, fasting can provide with a beautiful time for cleansing spiritually, psychologically and physically. It is not for people who feel like they “need” to detox and/or have toxic symptoms.

In a perfect world, everyone would take one week away from work and family, three times per year, solely to dedicate themselves to a detoxification retreat. Systems in India known as panchakarma, and European spa therapies were based on these principles. Often, even longer was dedicated to this practice if the person was really toxic.

For the rest of us, we need to continue working and functioning in our day to day lives, while doing our “deep cleaning.” Typical detox programs include herbal support which helps cleaning via the colon and liver, and although programs exist that focus on detoxing through the skin and kidneys, I will not go into those tonight. My clinical practice has found simple programs such as the Advanced Naturals First Detox and Cleanse Max as well as the Zand QuickCleanse Kit to be simple, easy to follow programs providing nutritional advice and supportive herbs at a reasonable cost. If you are new to detox, you may find that whatever symptoms you have may increase (even several fold) during the first few days of the detox. Withdrawing toxic foods and chemicals while supporting cleaning can lead to an immediate exacerbation of whatever symptoms led you to look at detox. This is much like someone learning to meditate because of stress and random thoughts. When they first sit down to meditate, they will realize how truly toxic their mind was. This can be quite disturbing if you are not prepared. So it is with detox that when one initially starts to do it, there is a storm before the calm. For people with unique detoxification needs, medical detox programs such as UltraClear Plus and InflammX systems can, under a doctor’s supervision, provide you with a scientifically based nutritional detox program.

For the “purists” out there who wonder why they should take anything to help themselves cleanse, I would like to point out this simple fact. For thousands of years every healing system in every region of every place, everywhere on the earth has included detoxification systems which go beyond what you can do on your own. Whenever you see a pattern repeated everywhere over time, it is worth looking into. The time for healing is prior to disease, even prior to “dis-ease”. Taking advantage of a regular system of detoxification is one of the most helpful aids to your well-being.

Your Journey to Health and Healing,
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References:
Upon Request

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