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# Body Cleansing and Detox

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The body has its own sophisticated detox system.

## Body Cleansing and Detox

BY WINSTON J. CRAIG

Some detox programs may be unsafe.

**D**o you suffer from mood swings, depression, general fatigue, irritability, headaches, bad breath or a slow metabolism? Maybe your system needs a flush out. Dozens of books and Web sites suggest that our body needs a regular cleanse just as a car periodically requires an oil change. We are told that we need to experience detoxification, or “detox” for short, and periodically get a cleansing from accumulated poisons, parasites and environmental toxins. They claim that the body cannot, by itself, fully dispose of these waste products and toxins.

Our colon is described as the “sewer system” of the body; and as such, it requires regular cleaning. Compacted fecal material from eating too much processed and junk food, they say, needs to be removed by a detox diet. All manner of regimens or kits are available, such as Colonix, be-Cleaned Complete Detox Kit, etc. They say that the detox process will improve immune function, reduce allergies, eliminate toxins in the body and purify the blood. Testimonials abound claiming spiritual, physical and psychological health benefits from regular detox regimens. Even celebrities detox once a year!

A detox diet often emphasizes the use of raw, organic foods rich in fiber and water. Vitamins, specific herbs and antioxidant supplements are emphasized to help detoxify the liver. Drinking plenty of water is strongly recommended. Certain foods, such as açai, are promoted for optimal cleansing. In addition, laxatives may be used to help cleanse the colon. Juices are used to help flush out the kidneys. A master cleanse may involve a total fast.

Scientists and doctors dispute the value and need for detox regimens since the human body has its own sophisticated detox system. The gastrointestinal tract, the liver and kidneys do a great job eliminating toxins and cleansing the



blood and the bowel. There is no evidence that a detox diet augments the body’s own mechanisms. In addition, no surgeries or colonoscopies have ever discovered any evidence of compacted feces or other evidence to support the need for colon cleansing.

Detoxification often involves colon irrigation. This colonic cleansing may present some potential hazards. During the procedure, gastrointestinal perforation may result. Infections from poorly sterilized equipment may also occur. When repeated excessively, some colon cleansing regimes can lead to nutrient deficiencies. Excessive use of enemas have also been associated with cardiac problems related to electrolyte imbalances, and may lead to dependence on laxatives.

Since no scientific evidence supports the alleged benefits of colon cleansing, and there are potential dangers associated with the regimen, it is best to allow the body to perform its own cleansing. Certainly, a diet consisting largely of fresh fruits and vegetables for a few days, and daily drinking plenty of water, will assist the body to maintain optimal health. A short fast, on occasion, may also be beneficial, giving the body a period of rest from a complex and stimulating diet.

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