

8049 - Detoxing: The Big Clean

More and more people, especially the overstressed, time-strapped, and nutrition-starved, are turning to detoxification to improve their diets and cleanse their systems. But what is detoxing really all about?



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What is detoxing?

Detox is a naturally occurring physiological process wherein the body rids itself of toxic substances through sweat, urine, and feces. But sometimes, toxins don't leave our body - they hang around in our lymph and digestive systems.

Detoxing provides your body with a nutritional break so that it can become a better waste dumper and nutrient absorber. A proper detox lasts about a week and involves eating a nutritious, well-balanced diet that's high in essential vitamins, minerals, fiber, and antioxidants, drinking plenty of water and clear fruit juices, and getting enough

What is detoxing *not* about?

The main misperception about detoxing is that you need to go to a dietary extreme to achieve results. **Detox plans people should steer clear of water fasts, juice fasts, and combination water-juice fasts - or fasting altogether.** Detoxing is also not about using laxatives to clean out your digestive system.

Do we really need to detox?

The liver, the body's key detoxifying organ, actually does a terrific job of cleansing the body all on its own. A healthy liver processes most of the things we throw at it, sending unwanted stuff to our intestines to expel as stool, or to our kidneys to excrete as urine. *There is no scientific research showing that any detox regimen (fad diets or herb kits included) delivers on its promises, which is why you should always ask a doctor first.*

However, the basic premises of any detox regimen – increasing fluid intake and eliminating bad habits such as processed foods, cigarettes and alcohol, are positive measures to help our bodies. If you're considering a detox diet, get the OK from your doctor first and remember, the best diet is a healthy diet based on fruits and vegetables, whole grains and lean sources of protein.



To detox or not to detox?

Detoxing is a possibility for people with diets consistently low in one or more essential nutrients, such as certain vitamins or minerals, fibre, probiotics or antioxidants. A dietitian can help you analyze what you're missing and what you need more of.

Do not detox if ...

- are under 18
- are pregnant or lactating
- have a gastrointestinal disorder such as Crohn's disease or gastritis
- have an autoimmune disease such as lupus or arthritis
- are training for an endurance event
- have any other serious health condition not listed here

Which foods should I eat?

Detox foods should make up a balanced diet including:

- ✓ Whole-grain cereals, pastas, and breads: high in vitamin B, fibre, and minerals
- ✓ Probiotic yogurt: rich in calcium and protein, and the live cultures aid in digestion
- ✓ Whole fruits, especially acidic fruits such as orange, grapefruit, lemon, pineapple, and tangerine
- ✓ Leafy green vegetables, including broccoli, kale, Brussels sprouts, and arugula: high in vital vitamins and minerals, fibre, antioxidants, and isothiocyanates, which help your body break down potential carcinogens
- ✓ Salmon: low in saturated fat and calories, high in protein, and a source of omega-3 fatty acids, which promote heart health
- ✓ Water and clear natural juices: digest most easily and keep you hydrated



What are the benefits?

Eating better is your body's ticket to improving your energy, preventing long-term health problems, and achieving a general sense of wellness. Detoxing helps enhance general physical and mental well-being. It might even be your springboard to a more permanent healthful diet; when you're more in tune with your body, you feel better and you look better.

Resources: <http://bodyandhealth.canada.com/>, <http://www.canadianliving.com/>

Detox Plan Breakfasts

- **Banana porridge** - Porridge made with water and topped with natural yogurt, banana, raisins and honey.
- **Fruit salad with yogurt and oats** - Fresh fruit salad with natural yogurt and a sprinkling of oats.
- **Fresh fruit smoothie** - Fruit smoothie made from fresh fruit, natural yogurt and honey to sweeten if needed.
- **Muesli and yogurt** - Homemade muesli made from oats, seeds, nuts and dried fruit served with natural yoghurt.

Detox Plan Lunches

- **Vegetable soup and whole wheat baguette** - Large bowl of vegetable or lentil soup (either homemade or supermarket 'fresh') with whole wheat baguette.
- **Tuna and sweet corn baked potato and salad** - Baked potato topped with tuna (canned in water) mixed with sweet corn and natural yogurt and served with salad.
- **Mediterranean salad with rice cakes** - Rice cakes served with cucumbers, avocado, tomatoes, fresh basil and black pepper. Plus a handful of unsalted nuts.
- **Guacamole with vegetable sticks** - Homemade guacamole made from avocado, lemon juice, fresh chili, tomato and garlic served with carrot and celery sticks and whole wheat pita.
- **Tzatziki with vegetable sticks** - Homemade tzatziki made from natural yogurt, garlic, cucumber and lemon juice served with carrot and celery sticks and whole wheat pita.
- **Avocado and prawn salad** - Fresh avocado served with prawns, salad, balsamic vinegar and lemon juice.
- **Baked potato with grilled cod** - Grilled cod fillet served with baked potatoes and lightly steamed vegetables.

Detox Plan Dinners

- **Chinese vegetable stir fry** - Stir fry a selection of vegetables such as bok choy, spring onions, mushrooms, bamboo shoots and beansprouts in a little olive oil with garlic and ginger. Serve with brown rice.
- **Baked salmon with baked potato** - Bake a salmon fillet and serve with a baked potato and steamed vegetables.
- **Tuna and prawns with noodles** - Gently fry a selection of vegetables such as onions, mushrooms, peppers, zucchini and leeks in olive oil. When lightly browned, add a handful of prawns. Cook for a few minutes, then add canned tomatoes, tomato puree, black pepper and tuna canned in water. Bring to the boil and simmer until the sauce thickens. Serve with rice noodles.
- **Sweet and sour stir fry with rice** - Gently fry a selection of chopped vegetables such as onions, peppers, corn and mushrooms. Add canned pineapple (in fruit juice), canned tomatoes, tomato purée, white wine vinegar and honey. Bring to the boil and simmer until the sauce has thickened. Serve with brown rice.
- **Potato and bean casserole** - Gently fry a selection of typical casserole vegetables such as onion, carrots and parsnip in a little olive oil with garlic. When browned, add diced potato and fry for a few minutes. Add fresh vegetable stock, black pepper and your favourite beans. Bring to the boil and simmer until the casserole thickens.

Detox Plan Snacks

- Fresh fruit or fresh fruit salad
- Natural yogurt mixed with honey
- Plain popcorn
- Handful of unsalted nuts or seeds

Resource: <http://www.weightlossresources.co.uk/>