



SPRING CLEANSE/ DETOX

Spring is the time of year for renewal, and in Chinese Medicine, it is the Wood element time of year (organs: liver and gall bladder; taste: bitter). It is the perfect time of year for a renewing cleanse.

A detoxification program can be done for any length of time, but they are typically done for 2-3 days, or for 1-2 weeks. Done properly, a detoxification program can help lower the total body burden of waste, chemicals, toxins, and even toxin containing fat stores. It is not always necessary to maintain a normal amount of calories during a detox, but activity should be restricted in keeping with the degree of calorie restriction.

Most will find that after the first day, their energy improves, especially if you get outside and move. Breathing fresh air at the same time as you are increasing circulation by moving is imperative. Sweating is also an important way in which our bodies rid themselves of toxins.

During the cleanse it is best to avoid most meats, dairy, eggs, grains, most legumes, refined sugars, drugs and chemicals.

The diet should focus on foods that create an "alkaline ash" in the body, which decreases inflammation and improves the body terrain making it less hospitable to infection and disease. (see alkaline foods handout)

Vegetables are considered cleansing yet are also mildly building since they contain significant amounts of protein, starch, minerals and fats - the materials with which we are built and maintained.

Dietary Guidelines:

- 4 days prior to start: meals should consist of steamed or raw vegetables, fruits, millet or brown rice.
- 2 days prior to start: remove the grains (millet, brown rice) from your diet
- While on the program: eat steamed vegetables, fruit and vegetable juices, organic cold pressed oils and if you feel weak, eat organic liver.

The best foods to eat to support the liver and gall bladder: Green, leafy vegetables (kale, collards, mustard greens, spinach, dandelion greens, etc.) along with the cooking liquid, cruciferous vegetables (cabbages, broccoli, cauliflower, radishes, etc.), endive, cucumbers, beets, garlic, onions, artichokes, sprouted seeds, all raw and juiced vegetables, tahini and organic liver.

Recipes:



- Nettle and Cabbage Soup

Heat 1 Tablespoon olive oil in a saucepan. Add 1 chopped large onion and cook until soft. Add 2 sliced leeks and 2 cups chopped cabbage, cover and cook over low heat for 10 minutes. Add 5 cups of vegetable or chicken stock, salt and freshly ground pepper to taste, bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 20 minutes, adding 2 handfuls of nettle tops for the last few minutes. Remove from the heat and blend. Add 2 Tablespoons chopped fresh parsley or cilantro before serving. Garnish with grated nutmeg. (4 servings)

- Red beet and carrot juice (1/2 cup once daily).

- Liver cleansing and tonic tea: An equal mixture of burdock root, dandelion root, Oregon grape root, and sarsaparilla. Make a decoction by simmering 2 Tablespoons of the herbal mix in 4 cups of water for 30 minutes, covered. Remove from heat and add a handful of nettle tops (or young aerial parts). Strain. Drink 1/2 cup 3 times daily for 1 wk. You may continue to drink 1/2 cup a few times a day through Spring, as well.

- Liven Up Your Liver Juice (a.k.a. Digestive Jubilation Brew)

Juice 1 handful of fresh dandelion leaves, several sprigs each of parsley, fennel and cilantro, (1) 1-2 inch section of fresh ginger root, 2-3 carrots, 1-2 stalks of celery and 1 small beet. Add ¼ teaspoon turmeric, stir well and enjoy immediately. Drink only 4-6 ounces at a time, sip slowly, and dilute with water if you find the taste or effect too strong. If you don't own a juicer, try dicing all the fresh vegetables and herbs. Place them in a blender; add 2 cups water and blend on high speed for 2 minutes. Strain out the pulp, refrigerate the juice. If you wish, add small amounts of any of the following fresh ingredients: burdock root, whole chickweed plant, mugwort or yarrow tips, nettle tips, thistle greens, young plantain leaves.

- Master Cleanser drink:

4 cups water, 5 slices of fresh ginger - simmer for 20 minutes. Remove from heat and add 1/8 tsp cayenne pepper, and 1-2 Tbl maple syrup or agave syrup. This can be your drink for improving circulation.

- Gall Bladder Flush:(**Only do this if you know you have no gall stones, i.e. abdominal ultrasound).

Eat very lightly the night before the flush. Drink one or more of the above for 1-2 days before. The morning of the flush (should be a day free of heavy activity/work):

1/4 cup of organic unrefined olive oil

Juice from 1 squeezed organic lemon

Drink this all at once and continue to drink cleansing drinks throughout the day, and no solid foods.

You may also incorporate into your day a coffee enema to improve results.



- Coffee enemas twice per week are a great idea during a cleansing/detoxification program (see gentle detox handout).

- Bath ideas:

 - add 4 cups epsom salt to bath water

 - add 1/4-1/2 cup liquid bentonite clay to bath water

 - add 1/2 cup aluminum-free baking soda to bath water

 - add Peat pack (aka balneotherapy) for a more deep detoxifying effect. <http://www.torfspa.com/products.html>

- Stress Reduction

 - Throughout the day if experiencing stress, stop and sit quietly, take three deep breaths as described earlier, allow the shoulders to drop, and imagine tension flowing down and out of the body through the soles of the feet.

 - Take 15 minutes to one hour daily, to be quiet and allow the mind to be still. Different meditation methods provide ideas about how to do this. For ideas, see: Creative Visualization by Shakti Gwain, Guilt is the Teacher, Love is the Lesson, by Joan Borezsenko, and What We May Be by Pierro Ferruci.