

... YOUR GUIDE TO ...

GROWING HEALTH

Why Cleanse?



WHY CLEANSE?

Do you need to detox?

THE SHORT ANSWER IS YES. WE ALL DO.

THE LONG ANSWER

If you haven't noticed, we're living in a toxic soup. Our mattresses are off-gassing flame retardants. Our water bottles are leaching xenoestrogens into the water we drink. Many of our foods have been grown in pesticide-soaked soil. The processed foods we eat contain chemicals in the form of food dyes, preservatives, and flavor enhancers. The air we breathe . . . well, it ain't just oxygen anymore!

Depressing to think about, but it is important to consider how these toxins affect the functioning of our bodies and brains. It's even more important to learn how to rid the body of these toxins safely.

The liver works hard to rid our body of toxins, breaking them down into a form that the body can eliminate through our urine or feces. Yet, when the liver gets overloaded, these toxins get tucked away in fat tissue. Considering the brain is made up of 60 percent fat, toxins inevitably find their way to the brain and affect its functioning. Also considering that every cell in our body has a membrane that is made up of mostly fat, the functioning of every cell is impaired.

Toxins damage our cells' mitochondria — our body's source of energy. Mitochondria is the place where metabolism happens. These mitochondria are sensitive to damage. In fact, a toxic buildup can impair metabolism by almost 30 percent.

The good news: We can counteract the damage done to our mitochondria and thus stop the damage.

The many faces of the body's toxic burden

IF THE LIVER IS OVERLOADED, ANY SYSTEM IN THE BODY CAN BE AFFECTED. THESE ARE SOME COMMON SYMPTOMS OF TOXICITY:

- | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| ♥ | Headaches | ♥ | Irritated eyes |
| ♥ | Coughs and congestion | ♥ | Immune weaknesses |
| ♥ | Weight gain | ♥ | Environmental sensitivity |
| ♥ | Allergies | ♥ | Digestive issues |
| ♥ | Sore throat | ♥ | Fatigue and insomnia |
| ♥ | Aches, stiffness, or swollen joints | ♥ | Constipation |
| ♥ | High blood fats | ♥ | Muffin top |
| ♥ | Itchy nose, ears, and skin | ♥ | Moods and anxiety |
| ♥ | Skin rashes | | |
| ♥ | Frequent colds | | |



If you or someone you love has any kind of chronic health issue, including autoimmune conditions, cleansing is a beautiful first step in easing the cellular burden.

What if I'm feeling great?

If you're feeling great, you obviously want to continue feeling that way. I think of the liver a bit like I do the central file cabinet in your home. Every once in a while, no matter how organized you are, it's necessary to go through the files and discard what you don't need any more. The file cabinet then functions much more efficiently, and consequently the entire household hums a happier tune.

Like the file cabinet, our livers eventually reach a tipping point where a periodic cleanse would ensure continued optimal functioning of our bodies. As we age, we often accept foggy thinking, wider mood swings, low energy, and aches and pains as normal. We actually have much more control over our vibrancy than we think we do, no matter what our age. We don't want to wait for a disease to happen to act. Cleansing can help us recalibrate our definition of "normal."

So what does a cleanse do?

The goal of a cleanse is to lift toxins out of the body and to restore optimal functioning to the detoxified organs, thus the body in general. We want to create a climate in the body that is inhospitable to disease.

There are so many different cleanses on the market. Some involve fasting, some last for two days, five days or 28 days. Some involve lemon and maple syrup. Some are no-fat, and some involve an entire countertop of products. You'll find some specifically target the liver, some the colon, some both. I prefer a cleanse that is whole-foods based. Although some cleansing products can certainly help usher toxins out of your body, using powerful foods to cleanse your body helps build better eating habits that can continue even after cleansing. It makes a cleanse less like a diet.

Just as a good spring cleaning cannot be the only time you clean your home, a cleanse should not be thought of as a diet, or a period in which you take on certain lifestyle and nutritional behaviors, only to ditch them at the end of that period. Your body can't take that. Each time you cleanse, think of it as a step along your health journey, not a detour. It is a time to revitalize your body, get in between you and your health-degrading habits, and build up a repertoire of health-supporting habits that will sustain your vibrant health going forward.



Keys to a healthy, safe cleanse

A CLEANSE SHOULD:



INVOLVE DELICIOUS, REAL FOOD at the heart of the process. If the cleanse you choose is based on products rather than real food, there's a good chance you may not have the tools to eat differently at the end of your cleanse, let alone have new ways of feeding your family.



ADDRESS THE EMOTIONAL ASPECTS/PSYCHOLOGY OF EATING. So often, our eating habits and self-care practices are rooted in self-sabotaging beliefs. This is just one reason dieting doesn't work. We have to look at how we are with ourselves and learn how to treat ourselves with kindness. Cleansing ourselves from toxic beliefs is an important part of the cleansing process.



INVOLVE EDUCATION. You want to learn about what foods are doing in your body so you can use foods to achieve desired effects.



NOT EMPHASIZE CALORIES OR DEPRIVATION. Learning to listen to your body's signals and discern the difference between hunger and cravings is important. Mindfulness plays a significant role in developing a healthier relationship with our food.



EMPHASIZE other non-food means to detoxify our bodies, including exercise, breath work, skin care, and self-care methods.



Love Your Liver

10 EASY NUTRITIONAL STEPS TO KEEP YOUR LIVER HAPPY AND HEALTHY

1. DRINK WATER. Water carries nutrients to our cells and helps carry away wastes and toxins. Drinking enough pure water is one of the most important steps one can take to live healthfully. Drink most of your water away from your meals so as not to dilute your digestive enzymes while eating. Start your day with warm water to which you have added juice from half of a lemon. It's energizing, alkalizing, and detoxifying for your liver. Divide your desired body weight in half, and drink that amount in ounces each day.

2. EAT A RAINBOW OF FRESH, ORGANIC FRUITS AND VEGETABLES EVERY DAY. Think of the deepest color foods: beets, blueberries, kale. Consider juicing a combination of fresh fruits and veggies on a regular basis, emphasizing veggies over fruit. We're talking five to seven portions of veggies each day, starting with breakfast.

3. THINK GREEN EVERYDAY. Bitter greens are especially detoxifying for the liver. Arugula, parsley, dandelion greens, seaweeds, for example. Incorporating a green powder as a booster food is an excellent way to nourish your body and liver. Look for ingredients such as spirulina, chlorella, blue green algae, and wheatgrass.

4. EAT CRUCIFEROUS VEGGIES. Cruciferous vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage, bok choy, and cauliflower all stimulate detoxifying enzymes. Broccoli sprouts are particularly powerful in supporting the liver.

5. EAT FOODS THAT ARE HIGH IN VITAMIN C. It's one of the best detox vitamins around. Think lemons, oranges, and limes. Broccoli and other greens. Red peppers.

6. ADD FRESH GARLIC TO ANY MEAL. Throw out the pre-chopped stuff. Fresh garlic is a miracle food that stimulates the liver to produce detoxifying enzymes. Other sulfur-rich foods are also detoxifying: onions, leeks, chives, for example.

7. DRINK TEA. Green tea contains catechin which supports the liver. Try Rooibos tea (a wonderful substitute for black caffeinated teas). It has antioxidant effects and has also been shown to heal liver damage. Herbal teas containing dandelion root, burdock root, milk thistle, and fennel seed are especially supportive of the liver.

8. TAKE OUT HEALTH DEGRADING FOODS. Eliminate sugar, gluten, all refined grains (pasta, bread, crackers), alcohol, dairy, soy, and corn. These foods are common food allergens and do not enhance health (with the exception of some dairy if you're not sensitive to it).

9. PLAY, LAUGH, EXERCISE, AND BREATHE, then go to bed by 10 or 11 p.m. Take care of all aspects of your health.

10. SAY NO to sugar, processed foods, alcohol, toxic self-care and home-care products. When the liver cannot keep up with the toxic load, toxins are stored in our body's fat. Stored toxins can wreak all kinds of health havoc, including weight gain and other metabolic disorders.



There are many non-food activities that support the liver in its crucial detoxifying work. These activities need not be only for “cleansing,” but can be incorporated into a regular self-care routine.

1. EPSOM SALT BATHS

WHY: Epsom Salts are actually magnesium. Magnesium is a muscle relaxant, which makes it essential for heart health, but it also helps to relax the colon, which alleviates constipation. Being constipated while detoxing is not good. We need to usher toxins out of our bodies once they are released from our bodily tissues. Magnesium baths also support detoxification through the skin.

HOW: Fill bathtub with warm to hot water. Pour two cups of Epsom Salts into tub. Stay in bath for at least 15-20 minutes. Remember to stay hydrated by drinking water before, during, or after.

2. DRY SKIN BRUSHING

WHY: Dry Skin Brushing helps remove the dead skin cells that prevent the skin from effectively releasing toxins from the body. It removes bacteria, stimulates circulation, thus enhancing the tone of aging skin. Perhaps most importantly, it stimulates the lymph system to more effectively drain toxic debris from cells.

HOW: Brushing should be done on dry skin in gentle, short strokes with a brush that has natural and somewhat stiff bristles. Brushing the body takes from 5-10 minutes. Always brush from your limbs toward your heart. Brush lightly up your stomach and back toward the heart. Skip the delicate skin of your face.

3. YOGA TWISTS

WHY: Twists increase the flow of blood (and therefore oxygen) to your liver and adrenal glands, thus optimizing function. Twists also improve digestion.

4. CASTOR OIL PACKS

WHY: Castor oil is an age-old remedy. It stimulates the lymph, our body's internal excretory mechanism, to detoxify and get rid of cellular waste. Using castor oil externally is a painless way to restore the lymph's optimal function. It's a powerful anti-inflammatory and pain reliever, so incorporate castor oil packs into your bag of tricks.

HOW: Take a piece of 12" x 12" flannel or other 100% cotton cloth. Pour castor oil onto the cloth to saturate. Place flannel over liver (on your right hand side above your waist) and cover with plastic wrap to prevent dripping. Place heating pad or hot water bottle on top of flannel. Rest quietly for an hour or more while the castor oil does its work. Castor oil packs reduce inflammation and so can also be used on different parts of the body to reduce pain and inflammation. Store saturated flannel in plastic container for next use — can be stored safely for up to one year.

5. DEEP BREATHING

WHY: The lungs are an important detoxifying organ. Breathing deeply allows toxins built-up in the lungs to be released. Breathing deeply also shifts the body into a parasympathetic healing mode, which is essential for optimal detoxification.

HOW: At any time of day, in any circumstance (in traffic, for example), breathe in to the count of four, hold the breath to the count of four, exhale to the count of four, leave lungs empty to the count of four. Do this breath cycle four times. Repeat four times throughout the day.

Repeat four times throughout the day.

6. MOVEMENT

WHY: Circulation, oxygenation, lymphatic stimulation, and sweating are all ways to get the toxins lifted out of our tissue and out of our bodies.

HOW: Do a combination of stretching, burst exercises, and strength training.

7. SELF KINDNESS

WHY: Being kind to ourselves is the shortest route to change and healing.

HOW: Think of non-food ways to nurture and reward yourself throughout the process of cleansing. This is a huge piece of the cleansing pie. Be supportive, not a slave driver, in this process.

Contact me at laura@laurahalpin.com if you're interested in getting the support, education, and materials you need to make your cleanse thorough, safe, and life-changing.



ABOUT LAURA

I received my training as a Nutrition Consultant at Bauman College of Holistic Nutrition and Culinary Arts. There, I was able to formalize my lifelong interest and study of food and nutrition. During my time there (and since graduating with honors), I've extensively studied the impact that eating and lifestyle practices have on all the systems of the body. Of particular focus is the study of the gut, the health of which determines how healthy each one of us is....we'll chat about that!

Other areas of focused study are food sensitivities, anxiety and depression, auto-immune diseases, cancer and detoxification. I'm constantly reading and learning from leaders in the health field. Currently, I'm enrolled in a certification program called Functional Diagnostic Nutrition. I'm also currently engaged in a mentorship program under Dr. Sara Gottfried, a leader in the field of women's hormonal health. I'm an active member of a fabulous professional organization called National Association of Nutrition Professionals

MY APPROACH IS SIMPLE: no one eating approach is right for everyone; diets and calorie counting weaken our relationships with our bodies; eating healthfully should be and can be satisfying and fun; mindfulness and awareness bring healing; community is essential.

I'm passionate about food's ability to heal and about protecting our food supply. Super duper important to protect and fight for our food supply.

I have a really fun and creative husband, two teenagers who make me happy, a dog, Stella, (whom you will meet if we work together), and a village of incredible girlfriends who help make my world go round.

Visit me laurahalpin.com

