

Principles of Detoxification

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Toxic exposure is an unavoidable consequence of being alive. We are exposed to toxins in polluted air, polluted water, contaminated food, drugs and even from toxic by-products of normal metabolic processes. As such, our bodies have elaborate and effective ways to break down and excrete these substances. Five so called “emunctories” offer a way to process and eliminate toxins. They are the **Skin**, the **Lungs**, the **Liver**, the **Gastro-intestinal system** and the **Kidneys**. If all of these organ systems are functioning optimally more toxins should be excreted than are accumulated.

Imagine filling a bucket with a garden hose. Let’s say the average persons’ exposure to toxins is equivalent to the hose being on one quarter of the way. The bucket will slowly but surely fill up. Now, drill five holes around the bottom of the bucket and imagine that each hole represents an emunctory. If the outflow of water from the holes is greater than the inflow from the hose the bucket should never fill up. However, if the emunctories are blocked or not functioning optimally, the bucket will fill and eventually overflow. Symptoms such as fatigue, fibromyalgia, peripheral neuropathy, mental dullness, chronic pain, insomnia, headaches, ADD/ADHD and autoimmune disease can all be due to a full or overflowing bucket or even one that is filling too quickly.

Aiding and optimizing our body’s ability to detoxify can have profound impacts on health and well being. There are many ways to optimize the function of our emunctories.

Many toxins are carried to the **Lungs** to be blown off during expiration. Deep purposeful breathing exercises can greatly enhance the ability of the body to eliminate toxins. Take 10-15min, 2-3 times a day to concentrate on your breath.

The **Liver** is our major organ of detoxification. Many herbs like Milk thistle and Tumeric can be very helpful in promoting detoxification pathways but should not be used without the guidance of a trained professional. Vegetables like beets, radish, broccoli; cauliflower and cabbage all encourage liver detoxification and can be safely utilized by all people.

After the liver has properly processed toxins they are sent to the **Intestines** to be excreted. Adequate amounts of fiber ensure that the toxins are bound and eliminated, not re-absorbed by the body.

Any type of sweating facilitates the release of toxins through the **Skin**. Regular exercise, as well as non-active sweating (saunas/steam-bath), helps the elimination process via this emunctory.

The **Kidneys** play a major role in eliminating toxic material from the body. Adequate water consumption is a must in order to ensure optimal function. A good rule of thumb is to consume at least half your body weight in fluid ounces of filtered water every day.

Proper detoxification should be a daily focus for all people in order to maintain and restore health and wellness. Furthermore, periodic detoxification programs carried out several times a year can help to minimize the toxins in your body. Start off the New Year in great health by remembering your detoxification principles.

