

Detox the Body, Renew the Skin

Eliminating Toxins Can Clear Complexions

Barbara Hey

Toxins produced from stress, poor diet, fatigue, the environment, and less-than-optimum health can result in a dry, lackluster, acne-ridden, or hypersensitive complexion. If you're having difficulty stabilizing your skin, no matter how diligent the efforts to hydrate and renew, it may be time to consider another tactic: internal cleansing.

The term itself may suggest colonics or scrubbing bubbles for the digestive tract, but really it's simply a rest period for the body, a time devoted to detoxification by eschewing the bad stuff (sugar, chips, coffee, and cocktails, for instance) and consuming wholesome, clean,

in the body. "The skin is a mirror of one's internal environment," says Susan Ciminelli, founder of Susan Ciminelli Day Spa in New York City. The skin, she says, reflects "how one digests, assimilates, and eliminates food."

Hale Sofia Schatz, author of "If the Buddha Came to Dinner: How to Nourish Your Body to Awaken Your Spirit" (Hyperion, 2004), agrees. The reasons for undertaking a cleanse are twofold: "to allow the body to eliminate toxins and to increase the body's natural ability to renew itself through the rejuvenation of cellular growth," Schatz says. She recommends a cleanse that focuses on proper food combinations,

*After a storm
comes a calm.*

-Matthew Henry



Eating healthy, organic, whole foods is part of a skin-cleansing detoxification process.

unprocessed foods. The aim is to give the body time to rid itself of the detritus of a life fueled by caffeine, red meat, and refined foods, and then see and feel what happens. The benefits to body and appearance, say experts, can be dramatic.

Where to Begin?

The epidermis reflects what's going on

predominantly fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and nuts.

The detoxing process takes time. A few days is a good start, but a week or even a month is better. When the process is complete, the body is renewed and,

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Schatz says, "the skin all of a sudden starts looking more luminous, more radiant." But be forewarned: It often gets worse before it gets better.

"As the toxins get eliminated from the body, you see them most readily on the skin surface. Impurities in the body can come out as blemishes, eczema, or rashes," she says. And that worse-before-better phase can cause distress. "Clients will call me after the first days of a cleanse and say they've had a breakout, and I say, 'That's a healthy sign. The impurities want to get out.'" At this stage, patience is required, because whatever manifests will dissipate with time. Schatz's advice: "Listen to the body, work with the body."

Detox Basics

Following are some general detox fundamentals. As you go through the process, work with your esthetician for guidance and skin care support.

START SLOW.

With any cleanse, the best advice is to ease into it. "Most of our bodies are pretty toxic," says Schatz, noting that many people are at least somewhat addicted to the toxins of day-to-day life--those lattes to invigorate the afternoon doldrums and sugar, wheat, and dairy, all of which are tasty foods common in the American diet. She suggests starting with a preliminary period--a week or two of gradual dietary shifts--to prepare the body for what's to come. During that time, you wean yourself off caffeine (gradually, to avoid the headache), refined flour products, alcohol, and milk. Then, the cleanse can commence.

UP WATER INTAKE.

Critical during a cleanse, and always important for skin, is to increase the amount of fluids ingested. Schatz suggests doubling what you ordinarily drink, which will help the body eliminate the toxins it's releasing. That means lots of spring water, herbal teas, and fresh vegetable juices.

EAT SEASONALLY.

Make dietary selections appropriate to the weather and include fresh, seasonal food. That is, it's preferable to eat whatever fruits or vegetables are harvested in the particular season. Also,

make sure to consume foods in the winter that promote warmth (soups instead of salads) and in summer that are cool (melons rather than baked yams). In all seasons, sea vegetables such as arame, wakame, and nori are recommended, since they are rich in vitamins and minerals that benefit the liver--the organ at the front line of detoxing the body each day.

SUPPORT YOURSELF.

The particulars of a cleanse vary--what foods to eat and when--but have in common specific supplements to support the body (like a supplement of fiber, green food, or probiotics) or herbs to augment the detoxification of the liver. (Schatz recommends dandelion root, for instance.) Detoxing is also a time to relax, meditate, and rest--essential for the body to be refreshed.

Each step of Schatz's three-phase plan may last from two days to a week or two. Her plan begins with a period of just fruits and vegetables. Next, grains, seeds, and nuts are added, and finally protein (tofu, certain fish, beans).

Detoxing doesn't necessarily mean bland food, either. Schatz's book includes dynamic recipes like Ginger-Leek Miso Soup and Salsa Snapper (www.heartofnourishment.com).

In between cleanses just plain eating well can have concrete results, even in the eye zone. For example, Susan Ciminelli has a homemade under-eye lightener in the form of a soup recipe made with kidney-supporting adzuki beans (www.susanciminelli.com).

Of course, nourishing the body with healthful foods is about more than appearance. It's about maximizing health and bringing a consciousness and respect to the foods we put in our bodies. And then, the realization comes that the effort has brought about a multitude of gifts--more energy, vitality, vibrancy, and, not incidentally, looking better too.



Detoxing is an important time to nourish yourself with relaxation, meditation, and rest.

Nature's Nutritional Wonder

Cruciferous Vegetables

Cruciferous vegetables are powerful foods that can help prevent many forms of cancer, reduce existing cancer tumors, and aid in the prevention of heart disease. Broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, arugula, kale, and Brussels sprouts all contain isothiocyanates--a group of chemicals that break down carcinogens in the body, helping to metabolize toxins. Studies show that people who eat two to three servings of cruciferous vegetables each week lower their risk of breast cancer, colon cancer, and lung cancer. A National Cancer Institute study found that eating three helpings of crucifers a week dropped prostate cancer risk by 50 percent. The powerful chemicals in these veggies also reduce homocysteine levels, a known precursor to heart disease.

Cruciferous vegetables are low in calories and high in fiber and the chromium found in these foods helps regulate blood sugar and insulin function, key factors in keeping diabetes at bay. Even with all the benefits that

crucifers provide, many people refuse to eat them because of their strong taste. But a little creativity can go a long way in making these wonderful foods palatable: try cream of broccoli soup, cauliflower au gratin, stuffed cabbage, or the recipe below--the possibilities are endless.

BRUSSELS SPROUTS FOR THE MEAT-AND-POTATOES EATER

1 pound fresh Brussels sprouts, washed, stems trimmed, and outer leaves removed

1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

3 tablespoons cider vinegar

1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Salt and pepper, to taste

Thinly slice Brussels sprouts, either in a food processor fitted with a slicing blade, or by hand. Heat a heavy, nonstick skillet. Add olive oil and butter, swirling the pan so that the butter melts. Saute sliced Brussels sprouts for 5 minutes. Add cider vinegar and grated Parmesan, stirring briefly to incorporate. Add salt and freshly

ground black pepper to taste. Serves four--who will all be healthier for it!



Cruciferous veggies help ward off disease.

Foods to Boost Your Mood

Don't let your diet get you down. If you're looking for a quick pick-me-up that will boost your mood but go easy on your calorie count, consider these "superfoods" recommended by Mehmet Oz, MD, vice-chair and professor of surgery at Columbia University and contributor to Oprah.com.

KEFIR MILK

Try it if: you're looking to calm down.

Made by fermenting more traditional milk with kefir grains, this drink is high in the amino acid tryptophan, which produces a relaxing effect on the nervous system. As a bonus, the drink also contains a healthy amount of B vitamins.

ASPARAGUS

Try it if: you're feeling low.

This vegetable is loaded with folic acid, which is good news for your mood, as low levels of the vitamin have been tied to depression. In fact, one 5.3-ounce serving contains 60 percent of your recommended daily folic acid allowance. Plus, asparagus is low in calories and contains no fat or cholesterol, so it won't ruin your diet.

ORANGES

Try it if: you're stressed out.

Why? Vitamin C. This powerhouse nutrient can help support your immune system, skin, and more, but its stress-fighting powers come from its effect on your blood pressure. Studies

have shown that consuming 500 milligrams of vitamin C daily can dramatically lower cardiovascular and stroke risk. One orange contains about 80 milligrams.

*Be miserable.
Or motivate
yourself.
Whatever has to
be done, it's
always your
choice.*

-Wayne Dyer

I'm so excited to let you know that we have moved to a bigger, brighter suite inside Grapevine Salon. It is suite 21. When you enter the salon instead of turning left you will go straight and dead end into it. As always I appreciate each and everyone of you!

Have a Happy Thanksgiving!

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