



FOOD MATTERS

with Consultant Nutritionist Sue Radd

THE DETOX DILEMMA

Despite a lack of scientific merit and medical evidence on their safety and efficacy, detox diets are regularly promoted with promises of improved well-being, weight loss, and physiological benefits. But are they necessary?

Many detox diets are promoted these days, often described in terms such as “cell cleansing,” “immunity rejuvenation,” “body flushing,” “colon decontamination,” “skin revitalization,” and “liver purging.”

Generally, detox diets focus on fruits and vegetables (although these may be restricted) and ban or limit animal product foods such as meat. They can also promote the intake of extracts, which of course the promoter sells as part of a detox “kit.” The use of water is encouraged, and alcohol and caffeine are restricted.

The promoters of detox diets claim that our bodies are full of dangerous environmental toxins that can be purged by going on their “detox.”

The truth is, the body is constantly detoxing itself through natural, built-in mechanisms. If this were not so, we would all soon die! We have been endowed with extraordinary systems to eliminate wastes and regulate body chemistry. The liver, kidney, lung, gastrointestinal tract, and immune system work full time to remove or neutralize toxic substances within hours of eating them.

why you feel better

People often feel better when they start a detox regimen simply because they’ve dramatically changed what they put into their bodies—healthier fluids and foods (and smaller portions) and cut out the junk. For example, drinking more water will improve the hydration of your skin. Cutting alcohol and caffeine will decrease headaches. And eating less food results in less discomfort. There’s nothing magical about detox diets per se.

Rather than going on a “spring cleaning” every so often, you can boost your body’s natural detox mechanisms by adopting good health habits every day.

how to detox naturally

- ▶ Drink plenty of water.
- ▶ Avoid caffeine and alcohol.
- ▶ Eat seven colorful fruits and vegetables daily.
- ▶ Choose whole-grain breads and cereals.
- ▶ Replace meat with legumes and nuts.
- ▶ Don’t smoke.
- ▶ Take 10,000 steps a day (use a pedometer).

Nutritionist Sue Radd is the award-winning author of *The Breakfast Book* and coauthor of *Eat To Live*, internationally acclaimed for showing how savvy eating can combat cancer and heart disease and improve well-being. See www.sueradd.com for more nutrition information.