

WISDOM

HUMAN BODY

This article is part two of a multi-part series on your body's innate healing power.

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The Healing Powers of Cleansing and Detoxification

*Y*OU CLEAN YOUR HOUSE, wash your clothes and change the oil and filters in your automobile. You wash your hair and you brush your teeth. But how often do cleanse the inside of your body?

Think about how many toxins your body has to contend with daily in our chemically based society: air pollution from traffic and industrial emissions, pesticides and herbicides from food, and exposure to chemicals in just about everything from household to personal care products. It's estimated that in 1996 alone, more than two billion pounds of chemical pollutants were released into the environment in the United States.

The detoxification team

The human body, in its infinite wisdom, has six self-cleansing mechanisms that all work together as a team to clean it from the inside out. The digestive tract eliminates

stool. The kidneys eliminate urine. Skin eliminates sweat and the lungs/respiratory tract expel carbon dioxide and mucus. Lymph nodes eliminate allergens, viruses and bacteria. And, as the team captain, the liver has the largest responsibility of all: When a harmful toxin comes through, it chemically transforms it so that one of the other eliminative organs can excrete it.

Most of the time, your beautifully designed body cleanses so efficiently you don't even have to think about all the hard work it's doing—until it begins to strain under the heavy workload. There is a natural law of the body that most people break, then wonder why illness sets in. The law is simple: If you have a higher ratio of nutrients to toxins, your body will prevent illness and heal itself. But if you have a higher ratio of toxins to nutrients, your body will become diseased.

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Our bodies are wise, but often we're not. If we don't feed our bodies high quality, nutritious foods, our organs, which essentially act as filters, will get clogged up with toxic debris. As a whole, western society does not eat a cleansing diet, nor are people cleansing their bodies on a regular basis. This combination is literally lethal. It makes the westerner more susceptible to diseases such as arthritis, heart disease, hormone imbalances, allergies, autoimmune diseases and cancer, to name just a few.

Common symptoms that your body may need a cleanse include: fatigue, headaches, muscle aches, right shoulder pain, poor appetite (especially before 10:00 a.m.), heart burn, nausea, irritability, depression, PMS, menopausal symptoms, infertility, cancer, endometriosis, prostate problems, skin rashes, allergies, weak immunity, addictions, fungus and parasites.

Four cornerstones of cleansing

Traditionally, people have cleansed their bodies in the spring and fall because the rhythms of their bodies coincide with the rhythms of the earth. Unfortunately, many people are ill right

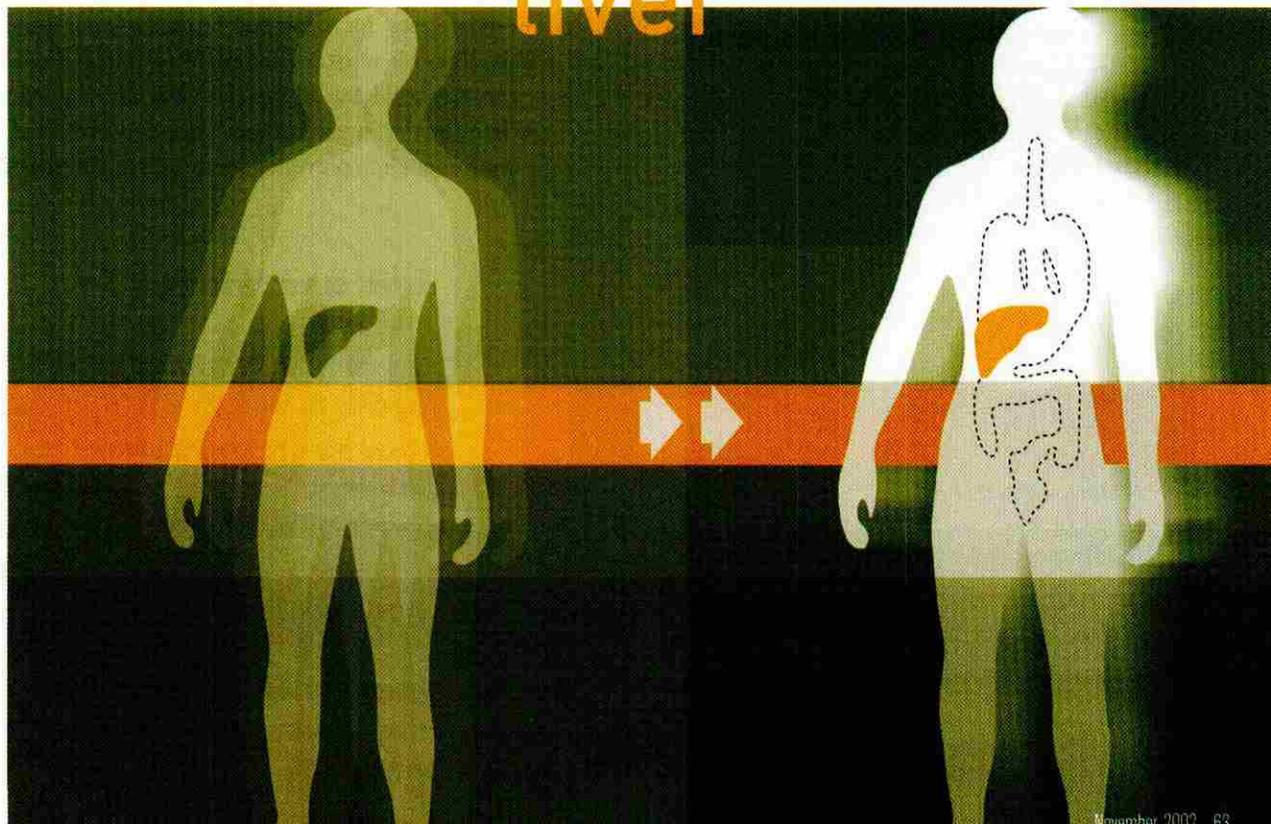
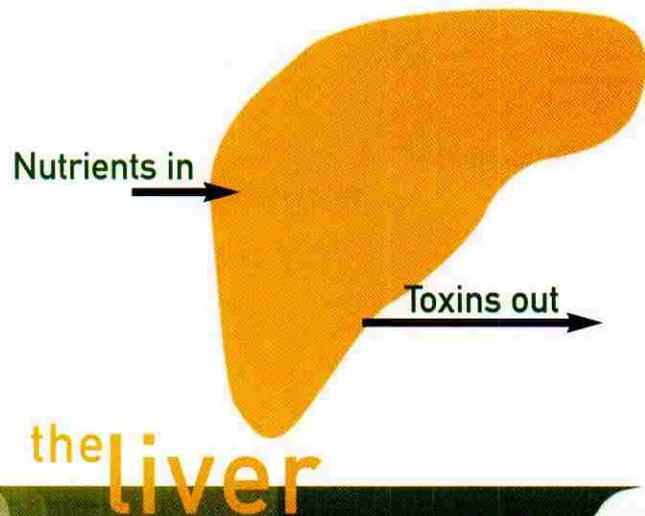
now, so I often suggest cleansing right away. Then, when you've built a strong foundation of good health, you can get on a regular program of cleansing with your natural rhythms.

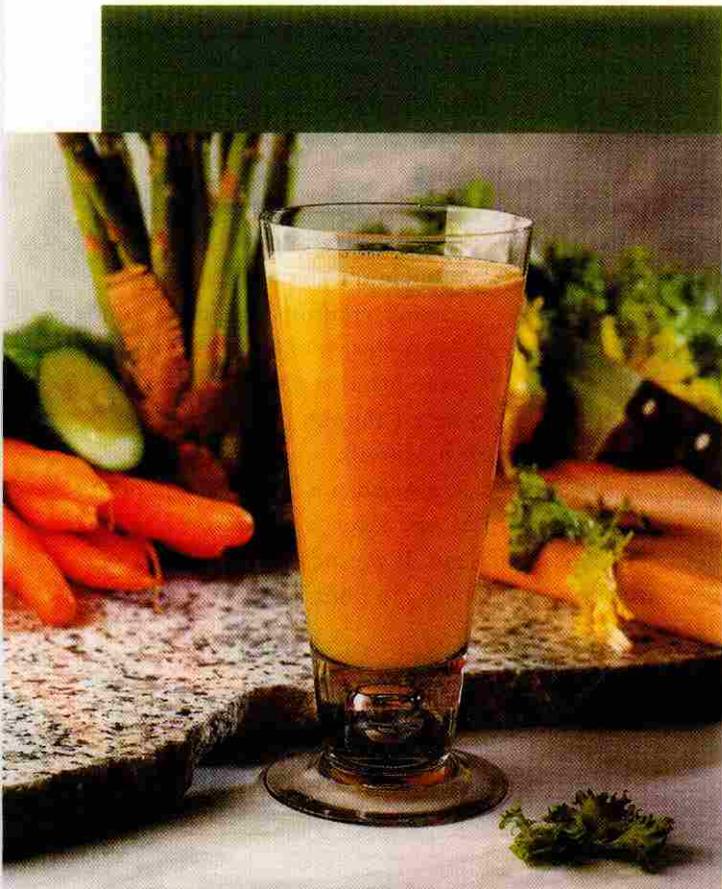
Rule #1 The first and foremost rule in cleansing is: Treat the cause of toxic overload. Eliminate all sources of toxins from your life, including poor food choices, toxic chemical use and even toxic thoughts. If you are using toxic chemicals in your home, workplace or hobbies, find safe alternatives. Replace toxic household cleaners with baking soda and lemon, for example, or pull up your dandelions and eat them instead of

spraying them with weed killer. If you are thinking negative thoughts, change them to loving and peaceful thoughts to keep both body and mind harmonious and strong.

Rule #2 Follow a cleansing diet. In order for the liver to process the toxic buildup in the body, it requires many vitamins, minerals and antioxidants to fully break down the toxins so they can be safely eliminated through our urine, stool, sweat and breath.

A cleansing diet is a good start in providing the liver with those needed nutrients. If you are eating a diet low in nutrients and fibre, switch to one with





Cleansing Juice Recipes

A good juicer is one of the best investments you can make for your daily detoxification program. Your body can easily recognize and assimilate the nutrients of fresh-pressed fruits and vegetables. Try these recipes to experience their healing energy.

Liver cleanser:

- 1 black radish or 6-8 red radishes
- 12 large green and yellow leaves curly endive
- 6 stalks asparagus
- 3 carrots
- 1 cucumber

Kidney cleanser:

- 3 celery stalks
- 2 tomatoes
- 1 lemon, peeled
- 2 carrots
- 6 large green leaves endive lettuce

Excerpted from *alive* Natural Health Guide #3, *Juicing— for the health of it!*, by Siegfried Gursche.

lots of raw or lightly steamed vegetables, fresh fruit, whole grains, quality fats and oils and adequate, easy-to-digest proteins. Live, enzyme-rich foods such as raw sprouts, miso, tempeh and sauerkraut are also cleansing. If you are eating food grown with hormones, pesticides and fertilizers, switch to organic. If you are consuming highly processed food that contains refined carbohydrates, hydrogenated oils, preservatives, food colouring and artificial flavouring, switch to whole, freshly prepared foods.

Rule #3 Get plenty of exercise—it's one of the best ways of eliminating toxins from your body. Moving and stretching stimulate and unplug your lymph glands, which act as your body's plumbing system, flushing and removing toxins to keep your immune system running smoothly. Aerobic activities such as running, swimming and dancing get your lungs working to eliminate toxins through the breath and your skin to release toxins through sweating.

Rule #4 Consult a licensed professional such as a naturopathic physician, acupuncturist or herbalist to design a cleansing program specifically for your body. This is especially important if you have never detoxified your body before. There are many fasts to choose from. If you are using herbs, have the professional match the herbs to your constitution. If you are choosing a juice fast, have the professional monitor when it is time to break the fast. It is very important to have a professional choose and modify your cleanse to your specific health conditions, lifestyle and medications, as well as to monitor your progress. You take your car into a mechanic and your aching tooth into the dentist, so take your toxic body to the natural-health practitioner.

Supplements, herbs and fasts are helpful, and even necessary in some cases, for repair and healing of your eliminative organs. But a lifestyle of exercising regularly and eating a cleansing diet every day will keep all systems clear and in good working order. When they're in good shape, your body will feel energetic and strong enough to prevent a multitude of illnesses. ■

Part three, next issue, is about immunity.

Dr. Christine Craig is a naturopathic physician practising in Kelowna, BC. The primary focus of Dr. Craig's Longevity Clinic is to teach patients the proper nourishment and detoxification of their bodies. She has a special interest in treating hormonal disorders such as infertility, breast cancer, PMS, endometriosis and menopause. Dr. Craig can be reached at 250-762-5200 or by e-mail at drccraig@okanagan.net.

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