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The Need for Detoxification



by Katie Johnson

Chemicals that are hazardous to life are found in every corner of our world. These harmful chemicals, called toxins, are found in our food and water, home building materials, makeup and personal care products, car exhaust, printed materials and pharmaceuticals. They have names like Red 40, bisphenol-A, fragrance and glyphosate. With the increase in use of chemicals in our environment, we have seen a rise in health issues, such as asthma, allergies, ADD/ADHD, auto-immunity, chronic infections, fatigue, weight gain and infertility.

One of the major reasons we are seeing an advent of chronic and inflammation-driven diseases is the increased toxic burden on our bodies. In a healthy individual, the detoxification systems work efficiently to cleanse and remove any toxins. This occurs through enzymatic breakdown in the liver, kidney and GI tract; sweating through the skin; and transformation of toxins by our gut bacteria.

However, for individuals with a history of increased toxin exposure,

these systems become overloaded, and the result is fatigue, weight gain, and eventually a disease state. The negative cumulative effects of increased toxin exposure are usually felt after months, or even years, and depend upon the type of exposure. Heavy metals, such as lead or mercury, affect the bones, joints, brain and adrenal glands; and halogens, such as chlorine, affect the thyroid and reproductive system. Toxins are often stored in tissues of the body as a means of sequestering these hazardous chemicals and preventing further damage. Fat cells serve as a major storage site for toxins, as well as bones, joints, brain tissue and arterial cells. For individuals that struggle to lose weight despite numerous attempts to eat better and exercise more, increased toxic burden may be the cause.

The need for detoxification is clear. The good news is when the sources of exposure are minimized or removed and the body is properly supported, healing can occur. In his book *Clean, Green & Lean*, Dr. Walter Crinnion, a leading expert on detoxification and

environmental medicine, outlines four simple and practical methods of improving detoxification. To feel better, we must clean up the diet, clean up the home environment, use doctor-recommended toxin-fighting supplements and improve elimination pathways.

Changing the diet is one of the most important steps to improving detoxification and produces almost immediate results. Eating “clean” means elimination of processed foods; fast foods; junk foods; soda; excess alcohol and caffeine; and nonorganic produce, meats and dairy. These types of foods and drinks are laden with chemical additives, colorings, sweeteners and pesticides, which impair the body’s detoxification systems. Instead, our diets should include foods high in antioxidants, such as organic berries and other brightly pigmented produce; cruciferous vegetables, which contain a toxin-fighting compound called sulforaphane; organic meat, poultry, fish and eggs, which provide liver-supportive amino acids; beans, legumes and gluten-free whole grains to provide fiber to cleanse toxins from the colon; and healthy fats, such as organic olive oil and coconut oil, which promote cellular energy production in the liver.

These detoxification efforts can help the body begin to heal and start a path toward better health.



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