

Life after detox: a healthier lifestyle

By Patty A. Harder

You've followed a program and gone through detoxification. Perhaps you've even used fasting to further cleanse your body. You're looking and feeling great. So, where do you go from here? How do you hold on to your new vitality?

"If you want to be healthy," states Julian Whitaker, M.D., in *Dr. Whitaker's Guide to Natural Healing*, "you have to live a healthy lifestyle." This requires a whole-person approach to living that includes proper diet, adequate supplementation, and plenty of physical activity.

Diet. Ralph Golan, M.D., in his book, *Optimal Wellness*, explains that, "there are many ways to combine the different elements of a whole-foods diet, some of which will not be right for any one individual all the time. Although we all require a certain amount of protein, carbohydrates, and fats, as well as vitamins and minerals...one person's needs may not be the same as those of another." Golan advocates experimenting with the whole-foods approach until you find a diet that you thrive on. "Follow how you feel and function," he writes, "while trying out different diets and foods."

Golan's key is balance. "We tend to imbalance our bodies with extremes," Golan says. "Too much of even a good thing can become harmful.... For any diet to be successful, it must be balanced and satisfying, both in the way it tastes and in how your body feels and responds to it."

Supplementation. While finding your ideal regimen of daily supplements is as individual as finding your ideal diet, "Taking a high-quality multiple vitamin-mineral supplement," explains Whitaker, "...serves as a foundation upon which to build."

Bobbi Lutack, N.D., a naturopathic physician in Seattle, Wash., and former faculty member of Bastyr University, agrees. "My bottom line," Lutack said in an April 8, 1998 interview, "is that most of our nutrients should be from food and then [we should] supplement with a good all-around multi." She suggests eating organic and free-range foods whenever possible. "On top of that," she said, "everyone needs to pay attention to omega-3 oils. Kids might take a teaspoon a day of flax or cod liver oil, or eat fish three times a week; adults should take about a tablespoon," and eat fish regularly.

Vitamin C is another supplement the experts suggest taking on a daily basis. "Numerous experimental, clinical, and population studies," writes Whitaker, "have shown positive results from increased vitamin C intake: reducing cancer rates; protecting against cigarette smoke and air pollution; boosting immunity; and increasing life ex-

pectancy." Lutack recommends that adults take "at least 1,000 mg of vitamin C" daily.

Exercise. "The absolute minimum [amount of exercise] for heart, or cardiovascular, health," states Lutack, "is three times a week for a minimum of 20 minutes of aerobic activity. But for overall good health or weight loss, exercise needs to be almost daily. It doesn't have to be super vigorous, but something that gets the heart going." She suggests cross training for optimal fitness, strength, and flexibility. "A little walking here, a little hiking there, swimming, biking, tennis."

Daily detoxification. Besides cardiovascular benefits, exercise is an integral part of the body's ongoing detoxification process. "I think of detoxing as a springboard to health," Lutack explains. Assisting your body to continue the process once the initial cleansing is done is vital. "You want to enhance all the organs of elimination. Sweating is part of detoxing. You can do it through urination, you can do it through bowel movements." Acidophilus, generous quantities of pure water, and exercise will assist in keeping the colon clean.

"The biggest thing you can do for ongoing detoxification is to treat the liver." Two of the most helpful herbs for this are milk thistle (*Silybum marianum*) and the Ayurvedic botanical, *Picrorhiza kurroa*. Good liver cleansing foods include beets, artichokes, parsley, turmeric, and carrots.

Saunas, hot tubs, and periodic mini-fasts are other ways to keep the body cleansed and detoxified. However, if you do fast, Lutack suggests staying away from water-only fasting and to break your fast in a safe and sensible manner. "Ease back into eating," she says, "with clear foods like soups, and soft foods like baked potatoes and salads, for about three days before you start eating heavier foods."

REFERENCES

- Golan, Ralph, M.D. *Optimal Wellness*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1995.
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