

Doing a Cleanse Right

For many years, herbal/alternative medicine has relied on cleanses to restore the body to balance and speed healing. Some of these cleanses can cause pretty severe symptoms and reactions, even the ones that have been in use for many years. Why is it that they seemed to work 50 years ago, but now make people so sick and even seem to do more harm than good in the long run sometimes?

I think that the explanation for this can be found by comparing our world today with the world in which the famous, old-time herbal doctors lived. More and more people today live away from the earth and pollutants and poisons are a part of our everyday lives. Chemical fertilizers and weed sprays have increased. We add chemicals to our water and hormones to our meat. And then there are the drugs that most people take so routinely that they often don't even consider them to be drugs anymore. I am often amused—and saddened—when I visit the medicine cabinet of a family who has recently gone herbal. Too often it is still full of allergy pills, throat sprays, non-herbal cough medicines, pain killers, fever reducers, headache remedies, and laxatives, to name a few.

All of these poisons are pulled out of circulation in the body by the liver. A cleanse, for most people, releases more of these medications than the kidneys and colon can cope with at one time. The result is headache, skin rashes, insomnia, and the redistribution of the toxins throughout the body. The poison often chooses to relocate along the brain stem. This contributes to memory and concentration problems. “Doing a cleanse right” means cleaning the liver (and anywhere else that needs it) without this redistribution of the toxins.

A cleanse done with proper supporting herbs should not cause feelings of discomfort while you are doing it. Cleansing shouldn't leave you feeling tired, out-of-sorts, or less than alert when you are finished. The trick here is to balance system cleansing and strengthening efforts in the proper proportions. This can be done easily if one pays attention to the signals the body is sending.

A renowned herbalist, Dr. John Christopher, was fond of saying that “discomfort” (his polite way of saying downright misery) “will be a sign of carelessness”. Small, frequently repeated doses are more likely to be effective and less likely to cause discomfort.

Toxin Soaks

To aid in the elimination of toxins, drugs, and pollutants from the body, always make toxin soaks a big part of your routine. A whole body soak is the most common way, but personally, I prefer just a foot soak. A whole body soak can sometimes leave you feeling weak and wrung out and sleepy.

TOXIN SOAK RECIPES:

#1—1 cup sea salt

#2—½ cup Epsom salts and 1 box of baking soda

#3—2 tablespoons of redmond clay (or any diatomaceous earth)

Place your choice of the above suggestions in a tub of hot water and climb in. Soak for at least 20 minutes, keeping the water as hot as you can. Alternatively, place 2 - 3 T. of clay in a large pan (big enough for your feet) of very hot water. Soak for about 20 minutes, keeping it hot by continually adding hot water as necessary. It is amazing how well pulling the toxins just through the feet works. It is just as effective as the whole body soak, much easier, and doesn't seem to make one feel tired or weak.

I like to routinely add a product called Miracle II Neutralizer to my bath between clay soaks along with whatever essential oils I want at the moment. In this way, I am continually working on the detoxing of my body, instead of going all out only on occasion.

Water

Drink! Drink! Drink! (Find good water without chemicals if you possibly can.) This cannot be overemphasized! Sufficient water will keep the eliminative channels open and prevent a host of discomforting symptoms.

The Cleanse

One good cleanse that I have been using, and recommending, for a long time consists of 5 parts:

A) kidneys, B) colon, C) liver, D) blood, and E) brain.

It is best to work with the first 5 of the body systems listed above together. All of the systems of the body are dependent on each other; if one is struggling the others usually are too. It is difficult to keep the liver and kidneys functioning well if the colon is continually dumping poisons into the blood stream.

I have made an herbal tincture or two in each of these categories and there are many good ones on the market. The recipes for the ones I use are in section two of this book. I recommend the following:

A) KIDNEYS:

KB tincture—or something similar—for the kidneys. Drink, drink, drink (water, of course) and soak, soak, soak. ^{1c}Reflections, a new essential oil blend from Butterfly Express, llc, is specific for kidneys.

Other herbs which may be useful: **astragalus, buchu, cleavers, cornsilk, cranberries, juniper berries, goldenseal and marshmallow.** **Chaparral** is a strong astringent herb and can be useful if there is stringy mucous from the kidneys. Chaparral should be used for only short periods of time. It is helpful to add an emollient such as mullein when chaparral is being taken. Never use chaparral if there is blood in the urine.

B) COLON:

The CD tincture is a combination that is well balanced between cleanser and support herbs. This is not a dramatic cathartic and stripper. It is used to support the colon and digestive system while the cleanse is proceeding.

Sarsaparilla should be added if you are starting out with a colon that is clogged or malfunctioning in any way.

Support the colon with exercise, mild foods, enzymes, acidophilus, fiber (oat and wheat bran mixture), water, water, water—consistently, every day, no matter what.

Other colon supporting herbs: **aloe vera, buchu, cape aloes, cascara sagrada, cayenne, fennel, ginger, papaya, peppermint, senna.** (Using colon herbs in a blend or rotating through them, never using the same one for an extended period of time, is a good idea.)

Essential oils that may be helpful: ^{1c}InsideOut, ^{1c}EZ Traveler, ^{1c}Julia, peppermint

C) LIVER:

The LC tincture, for the liver, contains both cleansing herbs and tonic herbs to support and strengthen. The essential oils, ^{1c}Revitalize and ledum, may also be helpful.

The liver has a very long list of functions that it performs in the body. One of these functions is the manufacture of carnitine which is essential if cells in the body are going to break down fat—rather than just store it away. Fat accumulates in the cells of the liver first and the liver can store more fat cells than all of the other organs combined. If the liver becomes compromised by fat, carnitine is not created and even more fat accumulates. A fatty liver used to be only in alcoholics. That is no longer true. Today's lifestyle and typical diet is a recipe for disaster to the liver.

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WITH A FATTY LIVER?

There are many. Let me summarize just three of them here:

- 1) Fat cells soak up and hold onto toxins. The more fat cells your liver has, the more toxins the liver can hold. Fat cells in the liver uptaking toxins almost sounds like a good thing, until you consider that a large percentage of new red blood cells are “born” in the liver. These new blood cells become contaminated and damaged by the toxins. They then travel throughout the body, trying in their damaged condition to carry oxygen and nutrients to cells and organs, but carrying contaminants instead.
- 2) Fat cells, in the liver or in the body, store estrogen. When the cells are full, this estrogen spills into the bloodstream. Besides all the nasty symptoms of out-of-balance hormones, estrogen levels which are too high are associated with several types of cancer. Among these are breast and cervical cancers.
- 3) The liver, magnified under a microscope, looks like a pinkish/red colored filter. If the liver is filled with toxic fat, it cannot do a good job as a filter for the bloodstream.

How common is a fatty liver? In the United States, 15-20% of the general population have too much fat in their liver. Your odds are much higher if you are overweight. Fatty liver can, and does, occur in children.

What are the symptoms of a fatty liver?

- You may be overweight, especially in the abdominal area, and you find it very hard to lose weight.
- You may have elevated cholesterol and triglyceride levels in your blood.
- You may have been diagnosed as insulin resistant or have Type 2 diabetes.
- You tire easily; in fact, you feel tired all the time.
- You probably have a lowered immune response. You catch everything that comes around.

Other herbs that may aid the liver: beet root, bilberry, birch seed and leaves, burdock, catnip, dandelion, devil's claw, fennel, gotu kola, hawthorn, red clover, thyme, and yarrow

D) BLOOD:

RC tincture, which is a blood cleanser and purifier, is an illustration of the synergy of formulas—the sum being better than its individual components. RC pulls toxins, drug residue, and fatty cells out of the blood and makes them available for excretion by the kidneys. RC is also an excellent infection fighter.

Other blood cleansing herbs: burdock, cascara sagrada, echinacea, Oregon grape root, peach bark, red clover, rosemary, sarsaparilla, and stillingia

E) BRAIN:

If the cleanse is done too rapidly, particularly from the liver, more toxins begin to circulate in the blood than the kidneys can filter. Because of the cleansing herbs being taken during the cleanse, the body is unable to store them in the liver. The body, knowing that you no longer want these toxins in the liver, finds new places to store them. Sometimes the body does this by encapsulating the toxins and storing them just under the skin here and there throughout the body. These hard little lumps are called lipomas. The palms of the hands seem to be a particular target for these storage containers.

The brain and brain stem also frequently become the site chosen to store toxic chemicals, preservatives, and drug residues as they are dumped from the liver. This is particularly common if heavy cleanses have been conducted, in the past, and the kidneys were overwhelmed. Exposure to heavy metals (welding, for example) or pesticides, weed sprays, and fertilizers can also cause deposits to be made along the brain stem or along the cranial nerves. These deposits can also occur in the joints, within the muscles, or along the nerves anywhere in the body.

Homeopathic detox combinations such as Detox #1 (available at Butterfly Express, llc) can be very helpful here. Any homeopathic detox formula should be started very slowly. Careful monitoring of the kidneys, liver, and colon as you go along and taking advantage of toxin soaks will clear the brain stem and other areas very nicely.

Essential oils such as the blends LeIQ and LeFocus (Butterfly Express, llc) are also excellent here. (There are many good homeopathics and essential oils. Most of the Butterfly Express, llc blends were, and still are, my “babies”. I know what they were created to accomplish and what they do. They are what I know and love and use, so naturally, they are what I talk about. If there is another line of oils that you know and love, of course you should use them.)

Essential oils can be helpful all the way through this process in both cleansing, balancing, and rebuilding. It would be helpful to support the endocrine system and the hormones. ^{1c}EndoRelief should accomplish both of these things. ^{1c}Revitalize can help with energy levels and fatigue during the cleansing process.

The most important thing to remember about the brain and any type of cleanse is that if you cleanse too fast, the debris you are removing from the colon and liver will be redeposited somewhere else. Too often, that somewhere else is along the brain stem where they causes varying degrees of havoc.

A cleanse done too rapidly, or without attention being paid to the eliminative organs of colon and kidney, can create as many problems as it solves. Many times these problems center in the brain, nervous system, and neck. There is no need for this to happen. It has taken years to get the body into this kind of mess. A little patience when cleansing will pay big dividends in the long run.

Some herbs that nourish the brain are ginkgo biloba, dong quai, ginseng, oatstraw, and rosemary.

Adjusting the Dosage to Personal Needs

Use the signals that the body sends (or muscle testing, if you do that) to adjust dosages according to personal needs. It is in this adjustment that you are able to keep the cleansing process well balanced. If these four phases of the cleanse are balanced properly, you should be able to avoid nearly all uncomfortable symptoms.

SOME EXAMPLES OF THE NEED FOR ADJUSTMENT:

A frontal headache indicates that too many toxins from the liver are circulating in the blood. It would probably be wise to back off on the LC tincture by taking less at a time and taking it less often for a few days. At the same time, re-emphasize the colon and the kidneys by increasing the KB and CD tinctures and making sure you are getting enough water.

A more general headache, or any dizziness, might be an indication of stress on the kidneys. A possible solution would be to increase the KB and go a little slower on the RC and LC until the kidneys are keeping up with the cleanse again.

An ache in the lower back is another indication that the kidneys are being overwhelmed. Go a little slower, support the kidneys, drink lots of water, and do a toxin soak.

Allergy symptoms and rashes are almost always a need for more work on the colon. You should have none of these symptoms, or ones that are very moderate and of short duration, if you are getting the proportion of cleansing herbs right. If you do get symptoms of this sort, simply adjust your program. Be sure to drink more water and do a soak a couple of times a week (at least) until the symptoms disappear.

The Diet

A good diet of simple, nutritious, fairly light, foods is essential at this time. Pay particular attention to the pH balance in the body. It is very important to be alkaline when cleansing. Certain unwanted bacteria cannot exist in an alkaline environment. Good health and balance in the colon can be established during the time of the cleanse, if you pay attention to diet.

Many people recommend a juice fast as part of a cleanse. I have no fault to find with juice fasting for short periods of time except that most people do not like vegetable juices. Soon they begin drinking more and more fruit juices and less and less vegetable juices. Fruit juices are sweeter and they feel almost like a treat. Too much fruit juice can create an acidic environment in the body. The result of this unbalanced pH diet and lack of fiber is canker sores, scaly skin, brittle hair and nails, headaches, lack of energy, an overgrowth of candida, and a flip-flop between diarrhea and constipation. There are, I am sure, a few other symptoms that I have failed to mention.

What foods are acidic and what foods are alkaline? I have seen many lists and I am not happy with any of them. Acidity and alkalinity is not a black and white thing. You can't say that one food is acidic and another is alkaline. I wish it were that simple, but foods line up all along the pH scale. It is good to know that red meats are more acidic than chicken or fish. Vegetables are far more alkaline than fruits. Even among the grains, some are more acidic than others. Oatmeal is quite acidic, but the vitamins that it contains make it worth it—maybe even essential—as a part of the diet.

A good rule of thumb for a diet plan is, in my opinion, to be sure to get plenty of protein with a lot of it coming from plant sources. Consume a lot of vegetables from every color of the rainbow. Add fruits for vitamin C and colon health. Keep an eye on the B vitamins, but don't over do the grains. Most importantly, don't waste any carbohydrates or acidity on sugary stuff if you can help it. Drink plenty of water and get some exercise and sunshine.

Rebuilding

Remember to rebuild and strengthen every system. This is a very important step. DO IT! Some suggested things to use: acidophilus and other live probiotic cultures, enzymes, vitamins, minerals, tonic herbs, and emotionally supportive essential oils.

Some tonic herbs (See tonic herbs): alfalfa, echinacea, ginseng, kelp, stinging nettle

High Mineral Tea Recipe: equal parts of alfalfa, red clover, dandelion, raspberry, and stinging nettle. I like to add comfrey, hawthorn, horsetail, and oatstraw.

Bee pollen supplements and EPA oils are also very nourishing.

Conclusion

Most herbs, as you may have noticed in the previous chapters, have more than one major characteristic and fit in more than one general category. One example would be the herb motherwort. Motherwort is not even a well recognized herb that everybody is acquainted with and uses, but it is listed in at least ten separate categories—demulcent, diuretic, emmenagogue, nervine, cardiovascular tonic, lithotriptic, alterative, vulnerary, and nutritive. This is true of so many herbs.

The specific action of an herb whether it is astringent, demulcent, or whatever, is the first thing to consider. The second thing to understand about an herb is what part of the body the herb has an affinity for. Here, again, many herbs nourish the body as a whole, but many herbs have a particularly strong action on one system or another. This is particularly true of the nervine and tonic herbs.

There is a lot of different herbs out there and a lot of information about many of them in this book. There is even more information right at your fingertips through the internet. Don't let the readily available information of our day overwhelm you. Learn to use a few herbs well. Choose an herb or two from each category and for each body system. Make pets of them. Use them frequently until you know them well and you will find your health and the health of your family vastly improved.