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Lighten the load

With summer upon us and the festive season right around the corner, it's easy to opt for a 'quick fix' detox solution in order to lose weight, improve overall health and wellbeing or eliminate aggravating symptoms. Quick fix solutions are often short lived, causing a relapse to old habits. However, by introducing simple steps to better your health that are easy to maintain, you are more likely to get lasting results.

A detox aims to rid the body of toxic or unhealthy substances. Toxins come in many forms such as; genetically modified food, artificial colours, flavours or additives, overuse of medication or alcohol, pesticides or herbicides, tobacco smoke or household cleaning agents such as bleach or chlorine. These substances can cause inflammation in the body, alongside a pro-inflammatory diet, which includes high amounts of processed foods, trans fats, refined carbohydrates and sugars. This can lead to decreased immune function, food sensitivities and inflammatory condition such as; eczema, diabetes, arthritis and cardiovascular disease. By eliminating toxins via our liver, kidneys, bowels, lungs, skin, lymph and blood, the body is able to function optimally. While undertaking a detox, you may feel sluggish, lethargic, nauseous, irritable, experience sleep disturbances or a change in appetite, this is very common in the first few days, but symptoms do improve.

Here are simple suggestions to assist the body in eliminating toxic waste and substances.

Increase water consumption to aid elimination channels

Water assists the body to flush out toxins and transport nutrients to vital organs involved in elimination. Increasing your water intake to 33ml per kilo of body weight, will assist the kidneys to remove waste products from the blood, lubricate and soften stool to encourage evacuation and enable the liver to eliminate bi-products. If you struggle to drink plain water, dress it up with lemon and mint, berries or cucumber to make it taste more appetising.

Support liver function

Eliminate alcohol consumption during a detox and assist the body with liver herbs, to reduce toxic load.

Why not try:

- I. Milk thistle, dandelion root, gentian root and burdock tea to stimulate liver function
- II. Proteolytic enzymes and Omega-3 fatty acids to reduce liver inflammation
- III. Increase vitamin B to replace lost vitamins from regular consumption of alcohol

Probiotics

A high strength probiotic with multiple strains; in either a capsule or powder, can be added to foods or cold drinks. This will help to support your digestive system to re-inoculate and restore your gastrointestinal tract (GIT) with beneficial bacteria and help fight foreign bacteria, yeasts, and parasites. Probiotics can help to improve allergies (especially those containing Lactobacillus rhamnosus) by decreasing allergic symptoms - itchy rashes and hives, watery eyes, congestion, producing more mucus and sneezing.

Alkaline foods

Include chlorophyll, chlorella, spirulina and increase a variety of green leafy vegetables, to alkalise the body and assist phase I & II detoxification pathways in the liver.

Squeeze half a lemon in a glass of warm water, 30 minutes prior to meals. This will help to aid digestion and increase hydrochloric acid production.

Good quality sleep

Create a bedtime ritual by going to bed at the same time each night, ensure your



bedroom is cool and dark, refrain from eating large meals 1 hour prior to bedtime and avoid using computers, tablets or phones, as the light from the screen reduce melatonin (hormone) production, which is necessary for quality sleep.

Take time out for yourself

A great way to reduce stress levels is to indulge in a lymphatic massage, which increases circulation and encourages the excretion of toxins via the skin and lymphatic system. Try using lavender, jasmine or bergamot essential oils in a bath or diffuser to relax and calm the mind and body.

Increase tryptophan-rich foods such as; milk, bananas, turkey, almonds, oats, dates and seeds to assist in the production of serotonin and melatonin.

Include teas

Not only do herbal teas add to our recommended water intake, but they can also cleanse and detox. Try green tea or matcha (whole tea leaf ground into a powder), licorice root, dandelion, rosemary and fennel tea to support the liver and gastrointestinal tract.

Make smoothies and juices

With the increasing popularity of slow press juicers and blenders, fruit and vegetables have never been so appealing. Why not try a delicious juice or smoothie for breakfast, with a shot of green powder blend, acai berry powder, matcha or baobab. By juicing or blending these ingredients, this process takes the pressure off our digestive system, so the body doesn't need to work as hard to break it down.

Detox your skin

The skin is our largest organ and being mindful of what we put on it is vital. Creams and other beauty products are absorbed by our skin into the bloodstream, and therefore, opting for more natural skin and body products is best. Kaolin, illite and montmorillonite clays can be used as a detoxifying mask for the face and body as it absorbs impurities (by drawing toxins to it) and clarifies the skin. Different clays are used depending on the skin type; green, pink, yellow, white. Green is the most absorbing best on oily skin, pink is for sensitive skins and most gentle, yellow is suitable for dry inflamed skin and white clay is generally well suited for all skin types.

Undertaking a detox twice a year helps to cleanse the body and remove toxins, resulting in increased energy, improved digestion and bowel movements, adequate sleeping patterns, reduced stress and glowing skin.

