

## Optimizing Detoxification

We live in a toxic world. Common sources of toxins include pesticides, antibiotics, hormones, heavy metals, chlorine, car exhaust, chemicals in cleaners, chemicals in personal care products and makeup and medications. Under normal circumstances, our bodies can detoxify harmful substances. However, when we are ill, or our toxic burden exceeds our ability to detoxify, our bodies may need additional assistance. If we can lower our toxic burden and improve our body's natural ability to drain and detoxify, we can drastically improve our healing and health.

### DIET

These are general dietary recommendations. You may need a more personalized diet to optimize your health and healing. Eating a diet that helps to reduce inflammation is essential. We recommend a whole foods, Paleo template as a starting point. We recommend including:

- Organic produce, including 8-10 servings daily of organic, colorful vegetables (including leafy greens, cruciferous vegetables, onions, garlic, tomato, root vegetables and sea vegetables), fresh herbs and 1-2 servings daily of fruits (such as berries, apples and citrus).
- Healthy fats, such as olive oil, olives, coconut oil, coconut, macadamia nuts, avocado and ghee.
- Grass-finished meat and poultry, that has not been given antibiotics or hormones, wild fish and shellfish.
  - Best fish choices are: salmon, sardines, anchovies, and shrimp. Avoid tuna, swordfish, mackerel and other large cold water fish with higher mercury levels and most farm-raised fish.
- Eggs free of hormones and antibiotics.
- Whey protein (if tolerated).
- Probiotic rich foods such as kefir, fermented vegetables, homemade yogurt and sauerkraut.
- If you react poorly to any foods, eliminate them from your diet for the moment. As your body heals, you will most likely tolerate them again.
- Stay hydrated. Water plays a tremendous role in detoxification. Each day try to drink half your body weight (in pounds) of any non-caffeinated, no sugar beverage in ounces. For example, if you weigh 100 pounds, this would be 50 ounces of water. We recommend filtered/purified water. You may also drink fresh squeezed



lemon or lime juice (1/4 lemon or lime) in warm water a few times daily. Rinse your mouth after to avoid damaging your teeth with acid.

- There are several foods and herbs that support healthy detoxification.
  - A few examples of foods include: parsley, fruits and vegetables, cranberries, beet juice, organic, raw apple cider vinegar, cayenne pepper, walnuts, caraway seeds, beets, broccoli, carrots, eggs, garlic, spinach, tomatoes, melons, peppers, cabbage, all cruciferous vegetables, Brazil nuts, onions, asparagus, avocado, mushrooms, artichoke, celery root, grapefruit, green and black tea, coffee, garlic, blueberries, seaweed and dandelion greens.
  - A few examples of herbs include: horsetail, marshmallow root, dandelion root, milk thistle, burdock, licorice root, dandelion leaf, dandelion root, turmeric, rosemary, rose, ginger, uva ursi, red root, cleavers, poke root and prickly ash.
- Aim to consume 25-50 grams of fiber daily. You can do this by eating plenty of fresh vegetables, adding freshly ground flaxseed to water, coconut yogurt or a smoothie, or soaking chia seeds in water or nut milk. You can also add a fiber supplement. Always increase fiber slowly and remember to drink plenty of fluids. If you experience increased gas and bloating by increasing fiber, it may indicate small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO). Talk to your provider at CCFM if you are having a difficult time increasing fiber.
- Supporting your beneficial gut bacteria, such as bifidobacteria and lactobacillus species, can improve detoxification. A diet rich in prebiotic and probiotic foods can help you accomplish this goal. Some examples of prebiotic foods include: onions, jicama, artichoke and asparagus. Kefir, sauerkraut and yogurt are examples of probiotic foods.

## DRAINAGE AND DETOX ACTIVITIES

It is always best to make sure the drain is open before increasing detoxification. If you feel worse from detoxification, you may need to work on drainage first. Below are examples of drainage and detoxification practices you can choose from.

### Drainage Practices

- **Dry Skin Brushing:** Dry skin brushing is an old Ayurvedic technique that helps to improve lymphatic flow and boost circulation. It helps to stimulate sweat glands, opens pores and removes dead skin cells. Dry skin brushing before saunas and/or showers can increase detoxification. Use a Boar hairbrush with a long handle. Brush your body in long strokes towards your heart. Around your chest, brush towards your armpits.
- **Exercise, stretching and yoga:** Exercise is an important component in any detox program for several reasons. First, if you are sweating, you will eliminate toxins through your skin. Second, moving your body helps to pump your lymphatic tissue. Many people who are chronically ill have stagnant lymphatic systems. Lastly, exercise stimulates your body to produce several important antioxidants and protective proteins such as glutathione. We recommend exercising daily. Depending on your health and fitness level, this may include a few days of more intense exercise with more gentle, restorative exercise on “off” days.
- **Rebounder:** Rebounder trampolines are a fantastic way to pump the lymphatic system. The action of jumping on a trampoline stimulates blood flow. Aim to do 10-30 minutes of rebounding daily.
- **Vibration Plate:** A vibration plate can be very helpful for moving your lymphatic system. Start with a few minutes daily. You can increase to 10-20 minutes daily. You can simply stand on it, hold your body in a plank or do squats, etc. One we like is [Hurtle Fitness Vibration Platform Workout Machine](#).



## Detox Practices

- **Infrared Sauna:** Infrared saunas aid in the removal of heavy metals and chemicals through the skin. The heat generated from infrared bulbs penetrates several inches into the skin raising the body temperature to encourage sweating. Circulation is also increased, helping to clear unwanted toxins and oxygenate tissues. In addition, heating the body to a higher temperature kills viruses and other microbes. Start with only a few minutes, slowly increasing your sauna time by a minute each time you sauna until you reach 15-30 minutes of sweating. Start with a few days per week and work up to 3-4 days weekly. We recommend you shower immediately after a sauna with soap to wash off any excreted toxins. Make sure to replace essential minerals by eating seaweeds, alfalfa, nettles and adding Celtic sea salt to foods. You can also take a mineral replacement such as Pure Planet Sports Salts. A few home saunas we like are: Sunlighten, SaunaSpace and Momentum98 Infrared Sauna.
- **Detox Baths:** Detox baths may include Epsom salts, clay, various herbs, essential oils and baking soda. Epsom salts are rich in magnesium and as you soak in the water, the magnesium is absorbed through your skin. Magnesium is used for more than 325 enzymes in our body to function, including several detox reactions. Epsom salts and clays also aid in pulling toxins out of your body.
- **Breathing exercises:** When we do deep belly breathing we increase oxygen intake. Oxygen is critical for the absorption of vitamins and minerals, which serve as co-factors in important detox reactions. Oxygen is also important in the production of white blood cells and improves lymphatic flow similar to exercise.

## LIFESTYLE

- Rest and sleep as much as possible. While you sleep, your liver works hard to detoxify your body. We recommend 7-9 hours of sleep nightly.
- Consider a daily stress reduction activity, such as meditation, Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) or HeartMath.