



**Health Corner:** in collaboration with the Earthrose Institute [www.earthrose.org](http://www.earthrose.org)

## Spring Cleaning: Spring renewal

An Acupuncturist colleague recently told me that Detoxification in Chinese Medicine terms means the removing of “devil toxins,” which included “heat, cold, parasite, damp, fire and food toxins”. He went on to describe that in Chinese medicine there are a number of different toxic patterns; phlegm, damp liver, qi stagnation or blood stagnation. In Western thinking, on a cellular level, our body is more likely to store toxins in the winter season and spring becomes the perfect time to release them through increased activity, lighter eating, or a detoxification program.

We are constantly detoxifying as we are continually exposed to chemicals in our environment; in the air we breathe, the food we eat, the water we drink, and the unknown chemicals in our homes, workplace and community. Inside our homes, household cleaners, solvents, cigarette smoke, air fresheners, and personal care products all contribute to a toxic environment. Outside the home, we find automobile exhaust fumes, smoggy air, industrial fumes, pesticides, and other agricultural chemicals. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) currently recognizes some four million toxins.

Toxins are also created by the body through the metabolic processes, and in response to unbalanced conditions. Emotional stress, an unbalanced diet, and consuming too much food can all contribute to toxic intake and body burden.

Elson Haas, M.D., in his book *Staying Healthy with the Seasons*, defines a toxin as “any substance that creates irritating and/or harmful effects in the body, undermining our health or stressing our biochemical or organ functions.”



More specifically, a body overloaded with toxins can result in a number of symptoms or conditions. These include constipation, stomach bloat, poor digestion, gas, fatigue, weight gain, excessive mucus, poor concentration, headaches, poor skin, poor memory, depression, body odor, and bad breath.

Some health practitioners relate toxic exposures to specific conditions including chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, inflammation, allergies, digestive disorders and cognitive impairment. Clinical ecology is rapidly becoming a new specialty to deal exclusively with how toxins in the environment affect our health.

### **Detoxification**

The body does have an efficient system in place to detoxify harmful toxins. The most important cleansing organ is the liver. Other eliminative channels are the bowels (the digestive system), kidneys, skin, lungs, and lymphatic system.



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When the body is doing its job and is not overburdened with toxins, the blood carries toxins to the liver, which uses enzymes to detoxify the harmful substances, rendering them harmless by converting them into a water-soluble form, which is then eliminated via the urine or feces.

Unfortunately, this system can handle only so many toxins and was built for “natural” toxins, not the excessive amount of man-made ones that we have to deal with in these modern times. If detoxification pathways in the liver are impaired, the breakdown of toxins can form intermediary metabolites that are more toxic than the original.

Our body may not know how to handle the multitude of toxins in our lives, and they can accumulate in harmful quantities or be converted to odd, unknown substances that can interfere with metabolism and cellular energy. According to the textbook *Nutrition, Concepts and Controversies*, this can result in conditions of inflammation, cancers, and neurological problems to name a few.

### Spring Cleansing Tips

- Drink Filtered Water - Water flushes toxins and waste on a cellular level from the body and transports nutrients to where they are needed.
- Infra Red Sauna
- Dry Loofa scrub to allow skin (largest organ of elimination) to release toxins
- Fresh, organic whole or raw foods ensure

that you get the enzymes necessary to adequately digest your food.

### Diet Tips

Increase greens – Leafy and green vegetables including dandelion, mustard, kale, and beet greens. Bitter greens stimulate the production of bile, increasing your digestive ability. Include Juicing and smoothies.

- Avoid chemicals in the environment and food chain: additives and pesticides
- Eat lightly, it is a time to release and clear out all that we stored through winter
- Eat seasonally, the young greens and sprouts of the season are highly cleansing
- Eat foods that are high in fiber, which promote elimination systems
- Increase Exercise
- **Morning lemon drink** – Starting each day off with warm lemon water stimulates your liver to detoxify your body - your skin will look better, you'll feel great, and you might even lose some weight! It is one of the easiest things you can do to increase your overall well-being. *Just squeeze half a lemon into a glass, and fill with warm water and imagine every cell in your body awakening and smiling in the morning light.*