

Colon Cleanse, Laxative or Not?

There are many colon cleanse products on the market, but many of these use harmful or addictive laxatives. A true cleanse should make your body stronger, not make it dependent.

There are numerous colon cleanse and body cleansing products on the markets these days. Cleansing, as it turns out, is big money. Supplement use is big money, which is why you see the pharmaceutical companies joining in the selling campaign these days.

Unfortunately, to feed consumer's need for immediate results, laxatives are added to many cleansing products, because this will bring fairly quick results. This would naturally lead one to believe the product really works! But a laxative, nature made or not, can be habit forming, bringing the opposite effect desired by those who cleanse.

True cleansing will help the body release the buildup of toxins and mucoid plaque in the small intestine. As the process continues and your body becomes "cleaner," it will become stronger and more efficient. This leads to better health, naturally.

To understand the difference, it is best to know how supplements work. A laxative works because it is a mild toxin. This toxin enters your body, your body recognizes it as a toxin so treats it as such. Your body's response is to send "water" from all other parts of your body to your intestine or colon to dilute the toxin, then spasms to move the toxin out. This is why cramping often occurs, though some may not even feel the cramping. It can also be very dehydrating in the long run. This toxin in question may be a pharmaceutical or could be "natural."

The natural toxin most used is an herb called senna. This toxin can be habit forming. It only takes a few days to become dependent on it. If you use a product with senna in it, it is best to slowly "wean" yourself off the product, not just suddenly stop using it. This could lead to constipation as your body has become used to a stimulant "forcing" it to work.

Natural stimulants such as cascara sagrada, buckthorn bark and triphala work better for a cleanse. All of these stimulate the release of natural

hormonal oils in the intestinal tract, which then leads to peristalsis (muscular contractions of the digestive tract). This natural release, in a way, "trains" your body to work on it's own, instead of forcing it to work. As you come off of a colon cleanse with this type of herb, your system should be able to work on it's own naturally, providing you are eating well and you "cleansed" long enough.

When searching for a good colon cleanse product, be sure to check your ingredients. True body cleansing will assist your body's natural ability to cleanse itself. The herbs should provide nutrition, which gives strength to your organs. It is a slow process since it can take 10-30 years to build up the excess waste. Knowing this, you see that it may take a year or two to undo the damage.

Stress Management and Cleansing

In today's busy society, we all need to learn some form of stress management. Most of us are aware that stress is linked to depression and many other diseases including cancer, heart disease, and lung disease. What many don't realize is that we can help manage stress with nutritional cleansing.

Stress is emotional and physical. When we feel upset, nervous, depressed or anxious, we either don't eat or eat the wrong things - "comfort foods." But it is times like these when we should take extra special care of ourselves. We can get our emotions in check and keep our minds balanced through stressful times starting with cleansing and healthy nutrition. Cleansing our bodies and our minds can rejuvenate and give a fresh outlook on life.

The food we eat can make or break our wellbeing. Eating healthy, nutritious foods makes us feel good while eating junk food can make us cranky and more stressed. Caffeine and sodium can raise our blood pressure, while sugar can cause "the blues." Many processed and junk foods contain these substances in high amounts, which can alter our feelings and, in turn, make life seem harder to deal with therefore more stressful.

A colon cleanse or total body cleanse can be a good place to start creating a new outlook on life. Why? One reason is that harmful internal toxins are created during times of high stress. When overly excited, angry or afraid, your body releases chemicals throughout. Ever felt butterflies in your stomach every time you think of a certain person or circumstance? This is the release of harmful internal toxins.

As these extreme emotions happen to many on a daily basis these chemicals are released daily and build up over time. In turn, not only do you have the daily emotional issues, but now the built up internal toxins add to and hold the pent-up anger and fear. Add to these toxins the chemicals in processed and junk foods. This is a harmful cycle of creating toxins, then adding more which makes us feel worse so we stress and create more, and so on. Our wellbeing is in jeopardy.

On the other hand, many people report feeling more relaxed, happier and less stressed after a cleansing program. Using a cleansing program can assist

your body in the elimination of the toxins instead of accumulating them. During a colon cleanse you not only eliminate the old buildup; but you should consume better quality foods which give you more nutrition.

The nutrients of the foods that you eat will determine if your body produces serotonin and dopamine in your brain, which are instrumental for relaxation. These nutrients can be found in foods such as whole grains, bananas, brown rice and tomatoes. We can also get the essential nutrients needed for healthy brain function from essential fatty acids, green superfoods and other highly balanced proteins found in foods like sprouts and nuts.

On the other hand, the nutrients – or lack of – may determine that your body will create excess insulin and cortisone levels, which are associated with depression. These can be created by over-eating or eating excess white sugar or flour, excess caffeine, aspartame, monosodium glutamate, and so on. Many processed and packaged foods contain these in excess and hidden amounts. Therefore, they are best avoided during times of stress.

Along with food, you can make deep breathing part of your cleansing routine. Five minutes of deep breathing can alleviate feelings of anger and frustration. When we are stressed, our breathing becomes shallow. Deep and cleansing breaths help us bring more oxygen and helps to relax and cleanse our mind. Breathing and relaxation are important in the practice of yoga and are known to cleanse and rejuvenate mind and body.

The Best Cleansing Foods

Your colon cleanse will be enhanced by eating foods that will “move through” (so to speak) quickly, without too much effort. They will be easy to digest, and may even contain some fiber. The best cleansing foods will help the body get rid of old build-up. For those who’ve been researching this, I’m sure you’ve heard the term “tar” or “mucoid plaque.”

“Mucoid” means “of mucus” and “plaque” means “plastic.” You know how people have heart attacks because of arterial plaque? Even though blood flows constantly, sticky platelets get left along the sides and build up to eventually clog. Same thing happens in your digestive tract – but it’s a different kind of plaque. Your arteries may build up calcium plaque while the bowels may build up mucosal plaque. So eating foods that cleanse your body instead of foods that leave behind build-up will make your efforts more worthwhile.

Many believe the body can eliminate this buildup on its own. However, think of digestion and cleansing this way. If you fall in the mud, you can get up and wash the mud off. But if you fall down in the mud, and a truck comes along and dumps another 50 pounds of mud on you, it’s not so easy to get up – it’s harder work. There’s nothing wrong with your body, but it is overburdened and now may need help. Cleansing is our way to help our internal organs eliminate the excess buildup.

The best cleansing foods to choose are; fresh raw fruits and vegetables, some lightly steamed veggies, nuts and seeds and whole grains only.

Lots of; herbal teas, water, lemon water and diluted fruit juice

Noooooo dairy, alcohol or processed sugar. If you eat meat, make sure it’s in small (size of your palm), lean portions.

If you eat grains, use only whole grains such as quinoa, amaranth, wild or basmati rice, and some whole grain sprouted breads and no pasta. Keep in mind that even though they contain some fiber, all grains will slow your cleansing process, so the more you eat, the slower you'll cleanse. This is because they don’t have the enzymes of the raw fruits and veggies and they

take longer for your body to digest. This isn't so bad if you want to limit cleansing side effects.

These are general guidelines. Follow these simple rules and remember to eat no or extremely small amounts of processed food to make your cleanse.

Remember no matter how good the best colon cleanse is, loading up on goodies will sabotage any efforts. Unfortunately, over eating causes your body to become too busy digesting and eliminating this excess. There is no energy or strength left to cleanse excess buildup and old waste. Junk food and/or too much food doesn't make more energy, it will burden and deplete your body.

The bottom line is, there are certain foods can make or break your colon cleanse. The best cleansing foods enhance digestion to help your body cleanse. Poor choices will burden your colon and your whole system. Using the list above will help you decide what diet is best for your colon cleanse.

Lose Weight with Raw Foods

We're all familiar with the knowledge that in order to lose weight we must speed up our metabolism. Exercise is a great way to do this – especially aerobic or cardiovascular exercise. But there is another way - by eating certain foods you can also increase your metabolism, lose weight and get all around healthier!

Enzymes are the key factor here. Enzymes are proteins that trigger practically every chemical reaction in the body from digestion to moving your muscles. However, these aren't your muscle building proteins – they are non-digested catalysts that **must** be present in order for all other bodily processes to happen.

Usually when enzymes are mentioned, digestive enzymes are what come to mind. However, the enzymes we are talking about are metabolic enzymes. These are responsible for fat burning, strengthening the immune system and alleviating tiredness. Adding raw foods to your diet can help your body restore healthy enzymes levels of both kinds.

You can start by incorporating raw foods into your diet. The more raw foods you eat, the faster your metabolism will get. But as with anything – don't overdo it. If you are not used to eating raw foods, your body may have a difficult time digesting them. Read on for easy tips to get your fill of raw foods right away.

Start your day with raw, fresh, organic fruit. The morning is your body's normal cleansing time when your body's ability to metabolize fat peaks. Since fruits are the natural cleansers of the body, having one or two servings of fruits in the morning will help this process. But eat it alone – you want to give it time to digest. If you are having protein or cereal for breakfast too, wait about thirty minutes after you eat the fruit. Eating these foods too close together may give you a tummy ache.

For lunch, have a large raw veggie salad with protein. This is time of day when your digestion is at its strongest and your body is ready to rev up your metabolism. For protein, there is a variety to choose from such as sprouts or beans. If you prefer some cooked food, you can add chicken, lean beef or fish with your meal. If you prefer more cooked food at lunch, that's okay.

Just be sure to start your lunch with a small, raw veggie salad – skip the high fat dressing, though.

To end your day, start your dinner with a raw veggie salad. Again, this gets your body ready to work and can help digest your dinner. Including this salad will help stabilize blood sugar as well as help your weight loss goals.

If you can't find time to eat your salads or snack on raw veggies (or want to do more), try drinking your vegetables. Raw, fresh made vegetable juice from carrots, celery and beets have plenty of live enzymes. These enzymes not only strengthen digestion, which can speed your metabolism, but they can also strengthen your immune system and keep you from getting overly hungry between meals.

Eating more raw foods will supply many benefits. Adding raw fruits and veggies will increase your metabolism, control blood sugar, help your body detoxify and can even minimize the risk of heart disease and diabetes.

You can keep your diet easy by simply replacing meals – or parts of your meals – with raw foods. Start with 50% raw and work your way up to 75 or even 100% raw. Search your local health food store for raw food recipe books to keep your meals interesting. The more raw foods you eat, the faster you will lose weight and the quicker you will receive all the other health benefits.

Chew and Live Longer

“Chewing is healthy. If you chew, you live longer.” My great “Aunt Vi” enjoyed reminding us of this during many meals that we enjoyed with her. On the nights she came over, I remember sitting in the living room listening while my grandfather and Aunt Vi were talking with the distance of the two rooms between them. This happened because - tired of waiting - my grandfather would move to the living room while she finished her meal which could continue for another hour or so after everyone else was finished.

I should have known she was right years ago – the time was the 60’s and my great aunt was in her 70’s. Besides the age experience, which should have given me a clue to her in-depth knowledge, she owned an organic apple orchard and sold soaps and other toiletries, which were natural, organic and didn’t pollute the environment.

Fast forward thirty years and now I’ve been graced with the nickname – Aunt Vi. I consider it an honor. I am thankful that I now know the benefits of chewing and I understand that you can chew and live longer. So now, instead of leaving you to guess why this old “wives tale” isn’t a tale, I’ll clue you in on why this process is so important.

Many people don’t realize that chewing is the first stage of digestion. A common belief is that we “break down” the food in our mouth so we can swallow and let the stomach digest. The truth is – if you don’t chew your food thoroughly, your stomach cannot digest it. Perhaps our lack of this understanding is the reason why so much money is spent on enzyme supplements.

Consider the “cherry test.” Apparently a man named Abbe Spallanzani did his own experiment in digestion by swallowing cherries whole only to find the cherries pass through his system whole.

This is important because it was believed that these cherries would at least be partially digested since fruits are supposed to be full of enzymes. What it does prove is that if food isn’t broken down in the mouth first – it will not be digested later. This is especially true with animal proteins and starches.

Here are some facts about chewing:

- When you do chew, you speed up your metabolism. Your digestion doesn't have to work so hard so it can go on to other things such as fat burning.
- When you chew, your hormonal system is stimulated. This is a key factor in keeping hormones naturally balanced well into your later years. These hormones are responsible for keeping your skin moist, your hair healthy, and warding off PMS.
- Chewing is good for your immune system. Studies by Dr. Tomozaburo Ogata of the School of Medicine at the University of Tokyo reveal that chewing stimulates the parotid glands, which are located under the ears at the base of the jawbone. When stimulated, parotin hormones are released which then cause the thymus to create T-cells.

When you thoroughly chew your food, relax and enjoy. Studies show that when relaxed, a person's parotid gland will produce watery saliva that is full of digestive enzymes. When stressed, the glands will instead produce thick saliva devoid of enzymes.

Incorporate healthy dining practices such as stopping all other activities when you eat. I read about a beautiful mealtime practice to take three deep breaths before eating. If you're with loved ones, hold hands while doing this. Use this knowledge to speed your metabolism, strengthen your immune system and balance your endocrine system.