

HOW TO LOVE YOUR LIVER

THE LIVER IS PROBABLY THE MOST UNDERRATED ORGAN IN YOUR BODY. PEOPLE KNOW IT HELPS WITH DETOXIFICATION, BUT IT DOES SO MUCH MORE.

It is a key part of the digestive system, and is responsible for balancing blood sugar, a key component not just for weight loss but also for health. In many ways it's like the best employee ever, who works away diligently and without complaint, even when its work load is excessive. Only when it really can't cope will it present with symptoms, and as soon as these are recognised and its workload reduced allowing it to heal, its ability to restore itself is second to nothing else in your body. When you love your liver, it really does love you back.

Signs your liver is chronically overworked include:

- Unexplained headaches
- Skin rashes
- Sensitivity to caffeine (or some medications)
- Difficulty digesting fats
- Excess body odour
- Food allergies or sensitivities (often to wheat)
- Bloating (especially just under rib cage)
- Difficulty losing weight

Within the 1.3 kg (three pints) of blood that flow through the liver every minute, you will find dead cells, cancer cells, micro-organisms, chemicals, fat globules and general sludge. All of this has to be processed. If your liver is overworked then a detox will be of great benefit.

Toxins vary in severity but they all cause damage to body tissues. The problems come when you put in more than you can eliminate. Our hunter gatherer ancestors' livers had much less work to do, because they weren't exposed to the

many environmental and food toxins we inhale or ingest today. They didn't have processed foods, all of their food was organic and fresh. Our livers have to work harder because we overload them. That's why it's important to give them a regular clean up and rest.

All detoxifying diets follow a simple 3 step principle...

1. Put a stop to any preventable toxins going in
2. Clear out the toxins that are already present
3. Put nutrients in that boost the detox process

When it comes to detoxifying there are a few "worst offenders" to cut out and they include:

- Caffeine
- Alcohol
- Unnecessary medication

- Processed foods
- High sugar intake

That's what not to do, so what should you do instead?

Top of that list is drinking clean (ideally purified or filtered) water. Staying well hydrated is one of the most important ways to support your liver. If you wait until you are thirsty to have a drink then you may already be 30% dehydrated.

When sweet foods aren't so sweet

When you have a diet too high in glucose, (found in vegetables and starches), the excess is converted into body fat. If you have a diet too high in fructose, found in fruits, then the excess is also converted into fat but stays within the liver fat, resulting in a fatty liver. This is an area of some controversy as the natural response is to cut out fruit completely, that is NOT the answer! Fruit contains many valuable nutrients and other substances that are





not found anywhere else. The golden rule is to avoid using fructose as a sugar substitute, and to choose crunchy fruits (your liver loves pears for example!) and any berries as these are lower on the glycaemic index and therefore do not get converted to fat. Limes, lemons and grapefruits also have great cleansing properties.

GREEN KEEPS IT CLEAN

As a general principle any green vegetable or legume (something in a pod) will help cleanse the liver so pile your plate high with leafy green veg such as cabbage, kale and spinach. You can add spinach or kale to a morning smoothie as well as make delicious soups.

CATCH UP ON YOUR ZZZ'S

Your body does most of its cleansing at night when you sleep. A detox works better if you take a holistic approach rather than just diet. Take a look at your normal sleeping routine and see if there are ways you can improve it. Try having a

bath in Epsom Salts, it's a great boost to the detox process and also relaxes your muscles.

GET OUT & ABOUT

If you want to detox during winter months it's really important to get out and get some fresh air rather than sit in a centrally heated house with the windows shut. You don't have to work out hard even the act of walking will stimulate your blood circulation but also your lymph circulation which is important for a healthy immune system. Make sure you breathe deeply, inhale for longer than you exhale and notice how this simple act can make you feel more energised.

SNACKS ATTACK

When you constantly snack between meals your liver never really gets the chance to balance blood sugar. During the detox, and then, make sure you eat enough good quality foods that keep you satisfied until your next meal. As an added bonus this will also help your gut flora.

WHAT ELSE?

There are a few more things you can add to your meals or drinks to aid the detox process:

- Garlic (activates digestive enzymes) add liberally to recipes. If you can face it, eat some raw!
- Apple cider vinegar (can be mixed with water as a naturally medicinal drink or used in some recipes or dressings. Mix together a quarter-cup of extra virgin olive oil, a teaspoon of mustard, half a cup of apple cider vinegar, two tablespoons of local honey, and small pinch of salt.
- Local raw honey (Naturally antibacterial, antimicrobial and antifungal)
- Turmeric – use liberally in cooking or make a turmeric milk using almond milk. Heat milk in a small saucepan over medium heat for 3-4 mins, stir unrefined honey (ideally local) and some vanilla (optional) into milk until dissolved. Whisk 1 teaspoon turmeric mixture reduce heat to medium-low and heat through until flavours blend, 2 to 3 minutes. Add more turmeric mixture to taste, if desired.