

Why You Should Not Go on a Detox Diet

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From your go-to health television program to your favorite nutrition website, there seems to be a detox diet that will provide you a “full body cleanse” at every corner. While muddling cucumbers in your water and drinking diluted [apple cider vinegar](#) may have its own wealth of benefits, the idea that there are toxins trapped within your body that have no way of



escaping unless you “cleanse” is medical pseudoscience that is based on little fact.

It’s nice to think that a little quality time with your juicer may pave the way toward achieving higher energy levels, clearer skin, and a better quality of life overall, but the detox industry lacks the medical evidence necessary to support the idea that there are toxins accumulating in your body that are becoming too much for your internal organs to handle.

It’s best to understand what it means to detox in the first place. The core idea behind detoxing is the idea that there’s a

build-up of toxins within the body that can only escape once you’ve eliminated all junk food from your diet and begun the process of either fasting, consuming copious amounts of fresh juice, or eating completely clean and unprocessed foods. While [there’s debate over whether toxins even build up within the body](#) in the first place, The Huffington Post outlines that there is a grain of truth to this idea.

A study conducted by The [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#) found that most people do have chemical build-up found in their blood and urine from a range of sources, including foods that are fried at high temperatures and non-stick cookware. These findings are cause for concern, as this toxic accumulation could eventually cause harm to your body, but it’s important to note that you don’t have to perform all of the detoxifying legwork yourself — your body has its own filtration and cleaning system that’s working 24/7 whether you take notice or not.

[The kidneys and liver](#) — the organs that are key in filtering and eliminating toxins — are hard at work to ensure that these harmful chemicals do not accumulate over time. The kidneys themselves are great at flushing excess water and waste while filtering toxins from your blood, but it’s really the [liver](#) that’s hardest at work daily, breaking down these toxic substances using a two-part filtration system. In the first phase, the toxins are defused and broken down into fragments small enough that the second phase can occur, which binds the fragments to non-toxic molecules that will then leave the body as waste.

The kidneys and liver are most functional when the body has an adequate amount of vitamins and minerals to support them, so in this sense, it is important to consume a variety of fruits and vegetables daily to ensure that these processes can happen with effectiveness and efficiency. However, this is really as far as your own personal “detoxing” should go — B-vitamins, vitamins A, C, and E, and amino acids found in animal proteins can help your organs fight off toxin build-up, but “cleansing” your body through extreme diets will only do more harm than good.



If you're wondering if a night of heavy drinking or two is enough to damage your liver to a point where it may not effectively be able to rid the body of toxins, you most likely don't have too much to worry about — The Guardian explains how [the liver works to rid the body of alcohol](#) in another very similar two-step process. The alcohol is first converted to [acetaldehyde](#), which is a substance that damages liver cells and is more harmful than

alcohol itself. Thereafter, it is immediately attacked by another enzyme that neutralizes the acetaldehyde into nontoxic acetate, where it can then leave the body as carbon dioxide and water.

When you drink too much, the liver does not get a chance to attack and neutralize all of the acetaldehyde, thus causing the toxic build-up that many detox diets capitalize on. However, mild to moderate alcohol consumption is not enough for this steep build-up to occur — unless you're drinking heavily multiple times a week over long periods of time, your liver is probably just fine. And, in this case, the best “detox diet” is to drink a moderate amount as to not overwhelm the liver and keep it from doing its job.

So, if our bodies are working to detoxify constantly, then why are we so consumed by marketing schemes and products designed to “cleanse” us? Science-Based Medicine describes how [we may be hardwired to believe we need to be cleansed of outside chemicals](#) like additives in food, alcohol, GMOs, and prescription drugs because we are made to believe that these modern luxuries are negative influences on our bodies and thus causing harm. However, many store-bought “cleanses” fail to even describe what these toxins that are supposedly wreaking havoc even are — these toxins are never named, their origins are never explained, and their specific location in the body is never mentioned. Marketing material will often list very general “symptoms” of toxic build-up as headaches or fatigue, though there's no way to ensure that this is the source of these symptoms in the first place.

For some, detox diets [can actually be incredibly harmful](#) to your health. Web MD explains that if you're a diabetic looking to “detox”, any sort of diet that's restrictive on what, or how much, you can eat can lead to dangerously low blood sugar levels. And, if you're looking to detox as a way to lose weight, then you may succeed, but you're not getting any healthier. Again, limiting your food intake to only “healthy” fruit juices or clean eating may help you lose a few pounds in the beginning, but you will not be making lifestyle changes that you'll be able to maintain. Aiming to lose weight through proper nutrition and exercise is the best approach for reaching and maintaining your goal weight.

All in all, the best detox is to eat less refined and less processed foods, keep your alcohol intake to a minimum, and exercise multiple times a week. Ensuring that you're getting proper nutrition is the best way to maintain liver and kidney health, so do your part in supporting your organs so that they maintain functionality. As far as purchasing items that are meant to “cleanse” your body goes, you should opt to save your money instead.