

Spring Diet Detox

A Good Spring Cleaning Flushes Out Fats and Toxins

by Ann Louise Gittleman

Spring—when the natural world re-awakens and bursts with renewed energy—is an ideal season to clean up our act. A cleansing diet to eliminate toxins from our body is as much a rite of spring as sweeping debris from our home. In my nutrition practice, I have often seen how after a sedentary winter of consuming heavier foods, our bodies may be carrying around as much as five to 10 pounds of toxic wastes.

While a properly functioning human body has its own built-in detoxification system, it can be easily overwhelmed by today's proliferation of environmental toxins. The newest environmental assault on the body's detox system is electro-pollution, according to research highlighted in the 2007



BioInitiative Report, a metastudy of 2,000 peer-reviewed studies compiled by an international group of researchers, scientists and health policy officials.

Compounding the problem, Paula Baillie-Hamilton, a British medical doctor specializing in human metabolism, reported in *The Journal*

of Alternative and Complementary Medicine that environmental toxins also play havoc with our body's built-in weight regulation system. In short, the more toxic our body becomes, the harder it is to lose weight.

Dietary Fat Aids Weight Loss

Clinical research from the University of Quebec as far back as 2002 suggests that toxins slow metabolism. It is widely

held that because many toxins are fat-soluble and stored in body fat, as the fat melts away, the toxins are released into the bloodstream; this inhibits the production of thyroid hormone, with a resulting metabolic meltdown.

According to Traditional Chinese Medicine, spring is the season to support the prime organs of detoxification—the liver and gallbladder. The liver alone impacts some 400 bodily functions, so it deserves support. The following symptoms recommend giving these organs some special care:

- ☐ Chronic tension in neck and shoulders
- ☐ Sensitivity beneath the rib cage (particularly the right side)
- ☐ Feeling tired and sleepy after eating
- ☐ Nausea, especially after eating fatty foods
- ☐ Hormonal imbalances with hot flashes due to perimenopause or menopause
- ☐ Premenstrual irritability and bloating
- ☐ Light-colored stools
- ☐ Waking between 1 a.m. and 3 a.m.

Detox Diet Basics

Start off each morning for two weeks (or up to a maximum of two months), with hot lemon water, perhaps spiced with cinnamon and ginger, for an added metabolic boost. The antioxidant D-limonene in lemon thins bile and is helpful in breaking down fat-trapping toxins. Use the juice of one small lemon to eight ounces of warm water.

Then, sip a total of 64 ounces of

cran-water between meals throughout the day. Mix one ounce of unsweetened cranberry juice per seven ounces of pure water. Cranberry helps to balance pH, suppress hunger and combat cellulite and water retention, while drawing out fatty wastes by targeting lymph (a secondary circulatory system beneath the skin that works to rid the body of toxic wastes, bacteria, heavy metals, dead cells, trapped proteins and fat). Sipped daily, this antioxidant- and phenol-rich elixir works to help reduce bloating and melt fat from hips, waist and thighs.

Nutrient-rich spring greens like arugula, collard or dandelion greens, lettuce, parsley, spinach, Swiss chard and watercress are classic foods used in a spring detox. Other good choices are antioxidant foods that supply the body with glutathione, the liver's premier antioxidant, also known as, "the toxic waste neutralizer," which is vital to organ detoxification. Broccoli sprouts are one of the best sources of glutathione; so is asparagus. Eating lightly steamed kale, Brussels sprouts, and cabbage can

also support the liver's ability to detoxify the body.

Finally, eating adequate protein is essential to ensure that the liver can produce the enzymes it needs to break down toxins into water-soluble substances for excretion. Protein plays a crucial role in tissue growth and healing, strengthening the immune system and burning fat. Eat at least 4 to 6 ounces of wild salmon, free-range organic poultry or hemp protein each day during detox. Choosing a daily dose of high-quality glutathione-boosting whey protein powder or a brown rice/yellow pea protein powder is another way to pump up the detox process.

Such spring cleaning can help purge our body of toxins and give our whole system the cleansing boost it needs, simultaneously preparing it for even more healthy weight loss in coming months.

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Detox Recipe

Spinach Soup

Makes 4 servings

4 scallions, chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
4 cups spinach, well packed
2 ¼ cups vegetable broth
1 bay leaf
1 tsp onion powder
1 Tbsp fresh parsley
1 12-oz package of tempeh
Juice of ½ lemon
Juice of ½ lime

In a large saucepan, cook scallions and garlic in ¼ cup of broth over medium heat until soft (about 8 minutes). Stir in spinach, cover and cook for another 5 minutes. Add remaining 2 cups of broth, bay leaf and onion powder. Simmer in covered saucepan for 5 more minutes. Remove the bay leaf. Purée the soup in a blender, adding remaining ingredients. Reheat if needed and serve immediately.