

# Digging into detox diets

The word “detox” is a popular term in diets today. Many detox diets and plans promise to help your body flush out toxins and get you healthier.

Some detox diets follow extreme guidelines like:

- Fasting (not eating) for long periods
- Drinking only special detox drinks or juices
- Using supplements or products that claim to detox your body
- Using laxatives, enemas or other products to empty the colon



## SAFETY CONCERNS

Many detox plans haven't been proven to be safe. Supplements and extreme diets can cause health problems. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has taken action against detox products that are dangerous or contain illegal ingredients.

Don't assume that a “natural” detox plan is safe. It may be risky because:

- Drinking large quantities of juice can be dangerous for people with kidney disease.
- Drinking juices that are “raw” or unpasteurized can cause serious illnesses from bacteria.
- People with diabetes often need to eat a healthy diet and need to eat at regular times. Fasting or drinking juice instead of meals can cause dangerous blood sugar levels.
- Using too many laxatives can cause dehydration, severe diarrhea and an imbalance in minerals and vitamins.
- Fasting for long periods can cause headaches, dehydration and fainting.



## YOUR BODY'S OWN DETOX

The human body is already designed to get rid of toxins. Most of this is done by the liver, which processes and removes chemicals, toxins and other unwanted things.

Supporting your liver is a healthy and safe way to “detox” without extreme or dangerous diets. You can support your liver by:

- Eating a healthy diet rich in fruits, vegetables, lean protein and whole grains
- Working toward a healthy weight if you're overweight
- Avoiding or limiting processed foods
- Drinking plenty of water
- Avoiding or limiting alcoholic drinks
- Getting exercise regularly
- Following directions on medicines and take medicines as your doctor prescribes
- Getting vaccines for hepatitis A and B, which are diseases that affect the liver



Not all diets are safe. Before you start any detox or diet plan, ask your doctor.

Sources: American Liver Foundation, National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health