

A variety of “detoxification” (“detox”) diets and regimens, also termed cleanses or flushes, are suggested as ways by which people can remove toxins from their bodies. They are also suggested as a way for losing weight. The theory behind cleanses is that by eliminating solid foods or specific food groups, toxins are eliminated. Supposedly this gives the digestive system a break and allows it to heal. There is no conclusive medical evidence that the digestive tract will heal from skipping solid foods (this does not hold true for those with a digestive disorder such as celiac disease or Crohn’s disease). A most important fact that is that the body naturally de-tox’s itself through its own **digestive tract, liver, kidneys and skin**. These organs are responsible for breaking down toxins for elimination through urine, stool or sweat. The body is meant to detox itself.

Detox programs involve a variety of approaches such as:

- Fasting: “a willing abstinence or reduction from some or all food, drink, or both, for a certain period of time. An absolute fast or dry fast is normally defined as abstinence from all food and liquid for a defined period, usually 24 hours.” Water fasting is drinking water but nothing else.
- Consuming only juices or other liquids for several days.
- Eating a very restricted selection of foods that often involve omitting protein and dairy.
- Using various dietary supplements or other commercial products.
- Cleansing the colon (lower intestinal tract) with enemas, laxatives, or colon hydrotherapy, also called “colonic irrigation” or “colonics”).

The *National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health* reports no convincing evidence that detox or cleansing programs actually remove toxins in a person’s body or that they improve one’s health. Weight loss on a detox diet probably occurs because these diets are often very low in calories. Some products and procedures used in detox/cleansing programs may be harmful to one’s health and recommend avoiding them.

- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration ([FDA](#)) and Federal Trade Commission have taken action against several companies selling detox/cleansing products because they contained illegal, potentially harmful ingredients; were marketed using false claims that they could treat serious diseases; or (in the case of medical devices used for colon cleansing) were marketed for unapproved uses.
- Juices that haven’t been pasteurized or treated in other ways to kill harmful bacteria can make people sick. The illnesses can be serious in children, elderly people, and those with weakened immune systems.
- Drinking large quantities of juice may be risky for people with kidney disease because some juices are high in oxalate, which can worsen kidney problems.
- People with diabetes should follow the eating plan recommended by their health care team. Diabetics are encouraged to consult their health care provider before making major changes in eating habits, such as going on a detox diet.
- Diets that severely restrict calories or the types of food that one usually eats don’t lead to lasting weight loss and may not provide all the nutrients needed.
- Colon cleansing procedures may have side effects, some of which can be serious. Harmful effects are more likely in people with a history of gastrointestinal disease, colon surgery, kidney disease, or heart disease.
- Detoxification programs often include laxatives, which can cause diarrhea severe enough to lead to dehydration and electrolyte imbalances and many trips to the bathroom.
- Fasting can cause headaches, fainting, weakness, dehydration, and hunger pangs.

Major thought: allow your body’s own “natural” processes to take care of elimination.

Resources: <https://nccih.nih.gov/health/detoxes-cleanses>

<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/are-you-planning-a-cleanse-or-detox-read-this-first/>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/nutrition-and-healthy-eating/expert-answers/detox-diets/faq-20058040>