

[IMAGE]

## **Learn to Detox Naturally**

By Julie T. Chen, MD

Are colonics the way to go when it comes to detoxing the body of toxins? The answer is plain and simple - no. The natural function of our intestinal tract is to cleanse itself. There is no physiological need to further clean above and beyond what it naturally does as its inherent function. Some people may want the colonic because they are constipated, but it would be better to place someone who has constipation on a regular bowel regimen, rather than an occasional colonic. Other people may want the colonic because they lose some weight with it, but that will come back once they resume eating and regular bowel functioning.

The process of the colonics is concerning because it disrupts natural intestinal micro-flora and has the potential to cause either microscopic or clinically significant intestinal tears. So, based on this idea of unnecessary trauma and risk to our bowel, the usual recommendation for those seeking "cleanses" is to use food as a natural non-harmful cleanse. Here's how...

Fiber acts as a natural cleansing tool for the body. By eating a stringent vegan/vegetarian diet for a few days, you can utilize the natural minerals, vitamins, fiber, phytonutrients, and water in the plant-based diet to "cleanse" your system without having to worry about potential mechanical trauma to your intestinal tract or physiological risk.

My usual recommendation for patients who are looking for a stringent cleanse to help calm and clean their system every few weeks or months is for the patients to eat vegan/vegetarian for 3 days before a vegetable-based juice fast for 2-3 days and again for 3 days after the juice fast.

This regimen can cause some fatigue when you first do the dietary cleanse and thus the juicing days should be on days where you do not need to be very active and can rest; weekends are likely the best time to be doing the juicing days. To make the juice, you would use a wide variety of vegetables and put them through a juicer machine and drink it fresh at each meal time.

I would recommend about 5 8-ounce glasses per day of the vegetable juice for those 2-3 days that you are consuming just the juice. Do not add sugars or processed foods or additives in the juice.

This juice cleanse should only be implemented once you have obtained approval and clearance by your physician first. It can be dangerous for those on certain medications (i.e., warfarin/Coumadin) and those with certain medical conditions such as diabetes, kidney problems, hormonal issues, liver diseases, and electrolyte/mineral disorders, just to name a few. This is because the types of food, fluid shifts/amounts, and minerals/vitamins, just to name a few factors, are altered from your natural diet and can cause issues in an otherwise stable medical condition.

So, for those of you interested in doing a "cleanse," consider food as your friend and not your enemy. It's just a matter of choosing the right foods. And this method of 'cleansing' is much less risky and significantly less medically concerning than colonics.

So, the five natural detox methods we can safely use at any time are:

- High fiber diet
- Avoidance of processed foods or sugars
- Staying hydrated with water and antioxidant teas
- Eating the colors of the rainbow in plant-based foods on a daily basis at every meal
- Get plenty of sleep and relaxation

These general rules help to maximize your body's natural tendency towards "detoxing" and "rebalancing." By eating a wide variety of plant-based vegetables at every meal, you are naturally absorbing all the vitamins and minerals your body needs to maximize your body's physiological functioning. When you rest and allow your body to relax, your body naturally turns toward cellular recovery and repair. So, instead of making drastic changes that may be too harsh on your body, why not just provide your body what it needs to naturally detox and repair.

Your money would be better off spent on purchasing healthy nutritious foods that act as a natural cleansing tool for our system; as Mother Nature had originally intended them to be, when she created the vast array of colorful fruits and vegetables grown in nature and made easily available to us at our neighborhood grocery stores.

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**Dr. Julie T. Chen** is board-certified in internal medicine and fellowship-trained and board-certified in integrative medicine. She has her own medical practice in San Jose, Calif. She is the medical director of

corporation wellness at several Silicon Valley-based corporations, is on several medical expert panels of Web sites and nonprofit organizations, is a recurring monthly columnist for several national magazines, and has been featured in radio, newspaper, and magazine interviews. She incorporates various healing modalities into her practice including, but is not limited to, medical acupuncture, Chinese scalp acupuncture, clinical hypnotherapy, strain-counterstrain osteopathic manipulations, and biofeedback. To learn more, visit [www.makinghealthyez.com](http://www.makinghealthyez.com).

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