



## Detoxification: Get Clean and Lean Prior to the Flu Season



*Dr. Kate Thomsen and Silky*

If this promises to be such a dangerous flu season, then we should be working on a strong and healthy immune system to give us resistance. Part of strengthening immunity involves nourishing food and specific herbs and supplements (especially Vitamin D) that support our immune cells. Equally as important is to unburden our bodies from spending energy and resources on elimination of unwanted products. The ubiquitous toxins in our current environment has given us a body burden that robs us of energy and clear thought and contributes to the epidemic of chronic disease.

Did you know that 75,000 to 80,000 new chemicals have been released into the environment since World War II? Less than 50% of these have been tested for potential toxicity in humans. Did you know that 350 different pesticides can legally be used to treat the food we eventually eat?

Do these toxins actually get into the body? Yes. Some 400 synthetic chemicals have been found in the human body. In the 2003 Body Burden Study, 156 pollutants were found in the blood and urine of volunteers. This included an average of 56 carcinogens

in each person. In 2005, the follow-up study found an average of 200 contaminants in newborns' umbilical blood. From arsenic in our picnic tables, pesticides on our fresh cut flowers, preservatives in our skin creams, endocrine disruptors in our plastics - we are exposed to toxins on a daily basis. These exposures have been linked with our current high prevalence of chronic disease - cardiovascular disease, cancer, osteoporosis, arthritis to name a few. Let's look at a few common but "heavy hitters".

Even the "optimal level of fluoride" in municipal drinking water has been found to be a developmental neurotoxin. There are many studies documenting lowered IQs in children whose mother drank fluoridated water versus children whose mothers did not. The fetus and the infant seem to be most vulnerable to fluoride's toxicity as is usually the case with most other environmental toxins. 95% of the world's population drinks nonfluorinated water and they still have their teeth!!! A citizen's group recently brought the EPA to court over failing to protect it's citizens from the risks of fluoride that are now known.

Heavy metals are another plague of modern society. Mercury from fish (and, if you are old enough you may have some mercury amalgam dental fillings) accumulates in our bodies and is a neurotoxin. Lead (from leaded gasoline and lead based paint from exposure prior to the late 1970s; also from cigarette smoke, water pipes and handling of ammunition...) is stored in bones only to leach out as our bones thin with age.

Arsenic is in the groundwater of many communities, including my own. Arsenic from untreated drinking water is associated with cancers of the bladder, kidney, lung, skin, nasal passages, liver and prostate.

Glyphosate, the active ingredient in the herbicide Round-up, is not stored in our bodies the way heavy metals are. The half-life of glyphosate in humans is between 5 and 7 hours. It's in and out pretty quick. The problem is that it never stops coming in. Glyphosate is so ubiquitous in our environment because of it's expansive use and airborne "drift" that you can ingest some with your organic Cheerios!! Glyphosate depletes us of minerals. It depletes the soils of minerals as well and the half-life of glyphosate in the soil is several months up to a year. It also disturbs the functioning of our intestinal microbes and depletes us of the building blocks for our neurotransmitters. The International Agency for Research on Cancer classified glyphosate as "probably carcinogenic to humans" - hence the million-dollar lawsuits now being won.

Electro Magnetic Frequencies are the invisible fields we are all walking around in. It's inescapable. Similar to the chemical toxicities, people have different tolerances to EMFs. Some individuals are genetically very sensitive yet most of us are unaware of the free radical damage that is occurring inside us in a steady progression until symptoms or conditions appear. "Unplugging" is certainly worth consideration if you have headaches, disruptive sleep patterns, chronic fatigue, depression, ear ringing/tin-

nitus, hypersensitivity/irritability, erratic blood pressure, skin complaints, and behavioral changes.

The human body has had to evolve elaborate processes designed to rid itself of toxins, primarily through the liver. A two-step process makes fat soluble toxins into water soluble substances that can be removed easily through the kidneys or intestines. But in the 21st century, the burden of toxins is greater than it has ever been. Removal of these toxins may be hampered by an individual's unique genetic makeup, inadequate dietary nutrients to support detoxification, and by heavy body burdens of toxicity.

Cleansing and detoxifying rituals from water fasts to spas, saunas and enemas have been used by cultures around the world. These are often practiced in the springtime when "cleaning house", new growth, and "fresh starts" are desired. I think it is a good time now to "clean house" before this perfect storm flu season hits us.

Usually a medical environmental detox program involves several elements:

- removing unhealthy (and potential toxic) foods from the diet
- increasing the consumption of healthy foods (in particular fiber and plant compounds that support liver and kidney detox)
- Some supplements that contain concentrated amounts of nutrients needed for Phase I of liver detoxification
- Adding a protein powder with the amino acids needed for phase II of liver detox

Detox programs must be well thought out and tailored for the individual as free radical damage can occur if the two-part process performed by the liver is unbalanced. Alkalinizing the blood, dry skin brushing, coffee enemas, intravenous detox protocols, and sweating through exercise and sauna therapy are other ways of augmenting a detoxification process.

In my practice, I encourage people to cleanse or "detoxify" once or twice a year. It can be a two or four week process and is often done more successfully with the support of a group. People will see conditions like rashes, joint pains and headaches disappear. Within three or four days, sleep is improved along with clarity and energy. A four to eight pound weight loss is common and often provides a "jump start" for a new nutritional and exercise program.

Let's learn how good we can feel by empowering ourselves into better health. Our immune systems will be stronger and our light can shine brighter through this darker time.

***Dr. Kate Thomsen's office for holistic health care is located in Pennington, NJ. She is trained in Family Medicine, and Board Certified in Integrative Medicine, and is an Institute for Functional Medicine Certified Practitioner. She has been practicing Functional Medicine for 20 years. For more information see [www.drkatethomsen.com](http://www.drkatethomsen.com) or call the office at 609-818-9700.***