

Spring Cleansing

By Dr. Julie Moore, ND

The spring season is upon us—as is the season for liver cleansing. The liver is responsible for hundreds of metabolic processes including detoxification. Continually bombarded with allergens, rich foods, alcohol, hormones, heavy metals and other environmental pollutants, the liver can become overwhelmed, congested and stagnant. As toxin levels increase in the liver and blood, the body resorts to alternative mechanisms for releasing these toxins. An over-burdened, stagnant liver, can cause a wide range of signs and symptoms.

Liver stagnation manifests as swelling, bloating, puffiness, fibroids and tumors. Toxins released through the skin may contribute to acne, eczema, and itchiness; deposition of toxins in the tissues may also contribute to degenerative conditions such as arthritis and cancer. Over time, liver stagnation generates heat as redness, hypertension, or inflammation, and emotionally, as anger, mood swings, anxiety and depression. Liver issues may even affect muscles and tendons, leading to inflexibility and inflammation. According to Chinese medicine, the liver's energy channel extends around the eye. Puffiness, redness, dryness, tearing, blurry vision and floaters all provide clues to liver imbalances, which generally improves with detoxification.

Supporting the Liver through Diet

Pungent foods such as garlic, onions, turmeric, asparagus, fiddleheads, ginger, fennel, curry, basil and rosemary all stimulate and decongest the liver.

Sweet foods harmonize liver function. Maple syrup, honey and dates are most effective in small amounts and when combined with bitter foods. Complex carbohydrates such as legumes, sprouted beans and grains encourage feelings of satisfaction while controlling blood sugar and helping lower cholesterol and blood pressure.

Bitter, sour and cooling foods reduce excess heat conditions. Bitter foods include dark leafy greens, vinegars, citrus peel and dandelion root. Fruits have sour and sweet properties and

provide a rich source of antioxidants. Chlorophyll-rich cooling foods like seaweed, kelp, endive, cucumber, wheat grass and cilantro provide a rich source of minerals, improve oxygenation of tissues and bind toxins for elimination.

Liver-Loving Nutrients

Magnesium: Important for the smooth flow of liver energy magnesium helps relax muscles and calm the nervous system.


Milk Thistle: Protects and promotes regeneration of liver cells and increases detoxification enzymes.

B Vitamins and Folic Acid: Vital for the nervous system and all metabolic processes including detoxification and energy production.

Antioxidants: Vitamin C, E, A and Selenium all inactivate toxic compounds for elimination.

Thinking Beyond your Diet

The best time for your body to cleanse is between 11pm and 3am. Eating a light dinner, taking herbs and supplements for detoxification in the evening and sleeping in a clean physical environment encourage healing at a time when the support of immune, nervous and lymphatic systems and of the kidneys, colon, lungs and skin must not be overlooked. Water, movement, sweating, massage, hydrotherapy, breathing exercises and a healthy diet consisting of organic foods contribute to a safe, effective cleanse.

Before beginning any detoxification protocol consult your Naturopathic Physician. He or she will be able to support and guide you throughout this process, safely and naturally. 

Dr. Moore is additionally certified in Chelation and Intravenous therapies, Neural therapy, Bowen and Acupuncture. She can be reached at Sage Clinic 604-697-0397 or info@sageclinic.com.