

Understanding and Avoiding Toxins

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The process of detoxing your body isn't something that happens overnight. It takes a while to fully rid your body of pollutants. And there's a learning curve as you begin to uncover all of the various toxic elements in your world.

We're going to focus on understanding and avoiding toxins, because adopting a detox lifestyle for a temporary amount of time isn't enough – you have to move forward protecting your body the best way possible.

Are You Breathing in Toxins?

All through the night, and as soon as you open your eyes in the morning, your lungs are filling with the air around you. You can't see it, but there may or may not be chemicals and pollutants flooding into your body through your airways.

In order to analyze your air, you have to inspect the place where you live, work and frequent. Is your town or city heavily industrialized? Do you see factories spewing chemicals into the air or a foggy haze over the city as you drive into work or home each day?

The EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) gives you information about the quality of your air on their website here: <http://www.epa.gov/airdata>. If you want current information, go to <http://www.airnow.gov> and see what the air in your area is like right this second.

You'll also be able to look at a forecast for the entire week and plan your outdoor activities for the most health days possible. The air quality is ranked on a color-coded scale.

- Green is when the air quality is good. You should plan to be outdoors on green days.

- Yellow means moderate. It's a sign that there are slight pollutants in the air.
- Orange is unhealthy for sensitive groups. It can cause coughing; shortness of breath and asthma in people who have underlying health issues.
- Red is unhealthy for everyone. You should stay inside for certain on red days.
- Purple is the worst – considered very unhealthy and alarming for anyone to be breathing in this type of air.

You want to check the Ozone quality for the day. This can result in respiratory issues because the ozone presence in the atmosphere is toxic to your lungs. Some cities will have highway signs that alert you to dangerous ozone levels and air quality rankings.

Sometimes you think you're safe in your car driving to work, but on the way there, you can smell exhaust fumes from other cars. Or if you're at a stoplight, you might smell cigarette smoke from someone smoking in the car in front of you.

It's best to avoid heavily trafficked areas where you're prone to breathing in pollutants whenever possible. You breathe in a lot of toxins with car exhaust, including nitrogen dioxide, which is harmful to your lungs.

Even in your home, you want to have a safety net available. Make sure you have smoke detectors – as well as carbon monoxide detectors, too. If you live in an old home with old paint, have it tested for lead.

Sometimes you'll be breathing toxins in your home for different reasons, such as getting your carpet cleaned, deep cleaning your house, repainting the walls, and more. It's not just an outside issue, either.

Analyze what you're doing outdoors in terms of breathability – if you're using chemicals on your lawn or in the garden to keep pests out, then you could be breathing in the same poison you're using to kill off bugs and repel vermin.

Because you're going to be exposed to toxic air, the best you can do is filter it before you breathe it in whenever possible. How do you do that? First, avoid outdoors on bad air quality days.

If you're going to be outside, look for areas with plenty of clean air away from the middle of the city. Get out in the countryside and inhale the pristine air of an untouched area as opposed to the heavily trafficked places.

Stop using toxic cleaners, candles and air fresheners that don't do anything more than mask the toxins with a specific scent. You want to look for organic, healthy cleaners to use around your house.

Stay on top of the air conditioner filters in your home. They will become riddled with dust and other toxins but they can only hold so much. Replace them twice a year or more so that you're breathing clean air.

You can also buy standalone air filtering systems for your home. Make sure they're HEPA quality. That stands for High Efficiency Particulate Air. You also want to manually dust your home's surfaces yourself.

Recognizing Toxins in Your Food

Some of the best tasting foods that you're addicted to are filled with dangerous toxins. But the great news is, your taste buds can develop a craving for natural, whole foods once you go through the detox process to rid your body of its dependence on processed items.

Food become toxic from the moment the seeds are put in the ground or the animals are injected with or fed toxic chemicals. For plant-based foods, everything from the soil it's put in to the fertilizer and pesticides piled on top can seep into the food source and then into your bloodstream.

We never consider the pesticides because we think we've washed the food properly. But there's always a residual amount of toxins involved. If you can, grow your own fruits and vegetables and use organic pesticides, like strategic plant couplings and other methods to protect the growth of your food.

Once it's been processed by manufacturers and is on the shelves in stores, it poses another problem for you. Processed strips foods of many of their nutrients and injects a bunch of unwanted ingredients, such as:

- Sugar substitutes (like aspartame or Splenda)
- High Fructose Corn Syrup
- Sodium Benzoate
- Food Dyes
- Butylated Hydroxytoluene (BHT)
- Monosodium Glutamate (MSG)

All of these harms your body in some way, shape or form and all should be avoided as much as possible. What's worse is, when some toxins are put together in one product, they become even more harmful.

They also genetically modify the foods that you eat. This is done before a food is grown, and while scientists could surely use their knowledge to provide better nutrition, it's all about the money – modifying foods to produce more, so they earn more.

You even have to worry about the packaging that your food comes in and containers used to cook your food in. You want BPA-free containers. You also want them free of phthalates, which may cause

cancer. Watch out for nonstick cookware, too, because this can be a carcinogen.

Using and Consuming Toxic Water

Your city should provide you with an annual water quality report. This helps you identify potential toxins in your water. It's alarming that many people make the water toxic by flushing their prescription pills down the drain, into the water supply.

You'll find that in some water supplies, you're being given water that contains:

- Fertilizer
- Sewage
- Discharge from electronics
- Discharge from drug factories
- Discharge from electronics petroleum refineries
- Erosion of natural deposits

The government will have a certain limit of allowable toxins in your water supply. So, you could be getting all of the above - bathing in it, cooking in it, and drinking it, and it would be under the guise of you getting "safe" water.

Even when a water resource is processed, that doesn't mean they're able to remove all of the chemicals and toxins from it before it comes to you via your tap. Even the processing system is flawed, filled with chemicals to kill of harmful bacteria.

You might want to have your own water tested. You never know what variables your agency used to conduct a test on their sample. If you have well water, make sure you test it annually.

Bottled water is often no better than tap water, depending on the type you get. Often times, they simply grab a bottle, fill it with tap water, and you're fooled into thinking it just sprang from a crystal-clear spring somewhere up in the unpolluted mountains.

Toxins in Unsuspecting Places

We talked about lead paint before. Lead poisoning can affect your brain and nervous system, and it's more toxic to children than it is adults. Older homes and offices are prone to this issue.

But lead can also be found in the water supply if your plumbing is outdated, and sometimes in antique collectibles around the house. You want to be aware of lead leeching into your world because it can cause irreparable damage to your health.

Do you remember the days when moms and dads were petrified of a thermometer breaking – or a lightbulb? It was a fear of exposing you to mercury. But you might already have mercury in your dental fillings!

Look to see if you have silver fillings. These are often half mercury, and many people are contacting dentists to have them removed and replaced with safer fillings that are now the norm in dentistry.

Fluorescent lightbulbs still contain mercury, and most families have moved on to better, safer options. But there's mercury found in other places, too – like canned tuna fish and even high fructose corn syrup.

You also want to limit your exposure to other heavy metals like arsenic. Who would ingest arsenic? Well, it's often found in chicken feed, fertilizer – and it's used in around-the-house products like wood furniture, outdoor playsets and more.

Sometimes even the things we do to improve our health can be toxic. If you see what's in medicines and vaccines, it's scary – but you have to weigh the pros against the cons. The disease you get from not taking it might be far worse than your risk of exposure to the toxin.

Chemotherapy and radiation are good examples of toxins for our health. They do devastating damage to the body, but they have to in order to kill off the cancer inside you.

All of these toxins are floating around you every day. If you become paranoid about them, you'll never get through a single day without stress hormones – another toxin to your body that's naturally produced inside of you.

The best you can do is become aware and take steps to reduce and limit your exposure. You've probably already endured some damage from these toxins – at a cellular level.

Your tissues can suffer from toxic exposure. Your nerves will be affected – and possibly subject you to some long-term complications as toxins accumulate over time. Your intestines will bear the brunt of the toxic effects because whatever doesn't get flushed out, sits stagnant there causing problems.

If it's not resting in your intestines, then it could be hiding in your fat cells. This causes bloat and weight gain and your body is defenseless as long as you keep pouring toxins into it and not giving it a chance to fight back.

You can throw your body and your mind a lifeline by embarking on a detox journey that freshens your body at a cellular level, so that it functions properly and you enjoy the benefits from your efforts.