

# Detox done right

With the Easter feasts and treats behind, why not give your body a break, and lose a bit of weight while you're at it, by going on a detox? *Get It* speaks to registered dietician Claudia Lilje from Equestria to find out how.

**W**ith April's Easter feasting over, you may find yourself feeling a bit sluggish, rundown and overweight. Chocolate contains a lot of saturated fat – the bad kind of fat that increases your risk of heart disease by increasing your

levels of artery-clogging cholesterol (this includes the 'good for you' dark chocolate as well). The Food and Agriculture Organisation's research shows that our daily intake of fats has increased by more than 10g since the 1990s to over 80g today, and that's on a regular day.

So give your body a break and do a detox. "In much the same way as you need a break from work, your body, too, needs a break from its work," Claudia explains. Ditch the leftover candy and get back on track to a healthier, hotter you.

## Detox deciphered

A detox is a short-term diet focused on foods that are nutrient-dense, fibre-rich and have minimal or no processing involved in their production. It is done to cleanse the body of all the toxins, bad organisms and by-products of metabolism, Claudia explains. "It gives your organs, especially your liver, a chance to reset and to work optimally again." Easter, with its high-sugar, high-fat treats, takes a toll on the liver, making this the ideal time to do a detox.

However, Claudia stresses that a detox should only be done, at most, for a week, since it does not provide all the nutrients necessary for daily activity. While celebrities have popularised detox programmes like the Cabbage Soup Diet and the Maple Syrup Cleanse, detoxing with extremely kilojoule-restricted diets is never a good idea. You are essentially starving yourself, withholding the nutrients your body needs to function properly, and this low-energy intake may actually slow down your metabolism. If you're going to detox, make sure you do it right and ignore fad diets and trends that lay claim to unrealistic weight-loss expectations – they'll hurt rather than help your efforts.

## Is it for me?

Claudia suggests that anyone with more than seven of the following symptoms is a good candidate for a detox:

- \* watery or itchy eyes
- \* dark circles under your eyes
- \* itchy ears, earache, ear infections
- \* bitter taste in your mouth
- \* stuffy nose or sinus problems
- \* acne or skin rashes
- \* headache or migraines
- \* bloating
- \* frequent or urgent urination
- \* sluggish metabolism and struggle to lose weight
- \* strong body odour
- \* joint or muscle aches.

Modern living has a lot to do with the ailments people experience because toxins like preservatives, flavourants, growth hormones and sodium, among others, are a large part of it, and they build up in the body. After detoxing, most people say they feel lighter, more energetic and better than they've ever felt before. Physical ailments like stuffy noses, digestive problems and rashes and problem skin may also disappear once the bad stuff has been removed. And then of course, as with any healthy eating plan, there is the added bonus of weight loss.

## What can I eat?

Natural foods are key to a successful detox. Autumn fruits like plums, pineapples, pomegranates, naartjies

and figs, to name a few, offer a wide range of sweet-tooth fixes while loading your body with nutrients. Veggies like aubergines, brussel sprouts and radishes are also seasonal and provide your body with fibre, antioxidants and essential vitamins. Claudia suggests eating low-fat, plain yoghurt, since it contains probiotics that are good for gut health. Red meat is a no-no, since it often contains artificial hormones, saturated fat, salt and preservatives.

A quick recipe for a delicious autumn detox salad? Combine about 350g red cabbage with 3 coarsely grated carrots, some parsley, 2 apples, cored and sliced, a handful of sliced radishes, about 3 tbsp of toasted pine nuts, 1 tbsp of pumpkin seeds and 2 tbsp each of sunflower seeds and linseeds. For the dressing, combine 2 tsp of grated, fresh ginger, 1 tsp honey and 2 tbsp of lemon juice with 4 tbsp of extra virgin olive oil. Pour over and mix to combine.

## Warning: headaches ahead

If caffeine, cigarettes and weekend boozing have been a regular occurrence in your lifestyle, then be prepared for the headaches, fatigue, rashes and body aches notoriously associated with detoxing. These indicate that your body is finally cleaning itself out. "The more side effects you experience, the more it shows just how much your body needed a detox," Claudia says. Water and herbal teas are very important during a detox, as they help to flush out the dislodged toxins and eliminate them. Once you start detoxing, the toxins that have accumulated in the body get stirred up," Claudia explains, "so it is very natural and healthy to have frequent bowel movements." She adds that it may be helpful to 'wean' yourself off of unhealthy things like alcohol, smoking and caffeine before you start your detox plan. Exercise, saunas, skin brushing and contrast showers, which involves switching between hot and cold showers, may also help alleviate the symptoms by helping to flush out the toxins quicker, since these activities stimulate the lymphatic system and improve blood circulation.



Compiled by: Dominique du Plessis

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