

Today's

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THIS ISSUE

- Body Cleanses
- Fever vew
- Exercise and Diabetes
- Spring Salads
- Nature's

Alternatives to Phen-

SPRING CLEANING

Spring is the traditional time for cleaning and setting things in order; time to go through and throw out. Our homes and yards are ready for a thorough cleaning, airing out and rejuvenating. And so it is with the body. Spring is a great time to cleanse the body of toxic material that has accumulated throughout the winter months.

Most people suffer from an accumulation of toxins from time to time. It is not uncommon because of the environment in which we live. There are contaminants in the air, water and food. The body's own natural functions also causes a degree of toxicity. Excessive amounts of certain hormones can be a problem. Toxicity can impair the body's ability to function efficiently. This can lead to different physical problems and disease.

There are ways to know if the body is in need of detoxifying. Most individuals will suffer from some of these occasionally. Some of the signs of toxic overload include: fatigue, illness, constipation, gas, skin problems, nausea, PMS, depression, and poor circulation.

There are ways to rid the body of toxins such as cleansing or detoxifying. Detoxification involves a change in the diet and health habits to promote body purification allowing for the channels of elimination get rid of toxic waste. A cleansing diet may help along with herbal and nutritional support.

HERBS FOR A HEALTHY LIVER

The liver is extremely important in ridding the body of toxins. It is the key channel of elimination. Good health is impossible without adequate liver function. It is one of the most important organs in the body and often is not considered when it comes to health. The liver cannot function if digestion is poor or the colon is congested. Everything the enters the liver must be detoxified.

Everything we breathe, eat and absorb through the skin is refined in the liver; it becomes overburdened when too much is required. The liver is required to detoxify at a much higher rate than ever before. The exposure to toxins has increased rapidly over the years.

The liver works by using enzymes to break down toxic material. The liver then converts the material from a fat soluble form to a water soluble form to be eliminated through the kidneys.

Milk Thistle

Milk thistle has a complex of compounds known as silymarin. These substances are actually known to protect the liver against some toxins and help increase the function of this important organ. Silybin found in this herb is used as an antidote to the deadly deathcap mushroom which is known to destroy liver cells. It also contains amines (thyramine and histamine) which are known to help stimulate the production and flow of bile. Milk thistle has been proven to be very beneficial on liver function.

Studies done recently indicate that milk thistle is beneficial for severe liver disorders such as hepatitis and cirrhosis, as well as general liver restoration, protection and strengthening. The properties of milk

thistle have been confirmed in animal studies to be a protection in liver disorders.

Turmeric

Turmeric has been found to contain liver protective properties similar to the glycyrrhizin found in licorice. This ability may be due to its powerful antioxidant activity. It also has been found to increase enzymes in the liver to prevent inflammation. Turmeric has also been found to increase bile acid output.

Turmeric has the ability to breakdown carcinogens and toxins allowing them to be excreted from the body without doing damage. It seems to protect the liver from toxic damage.

Licorice

Licorice contains glycyrrhizin and glycyrrhetic acid which help stimulate interferon in the body which is essential for protecting the immune system. It also contains liver protective properties preventing damage due to toxic exposure. Glycyrrhizin found in licorice is thought to inhibit cell injury.

Glycyrrhizin has been found in studies to be beneficial in treating cases of chronic hepatitis B. It seems to improve liver function as well as reduce liver enzymes that are known to determine liver damage.

Schizandra

Scientific studies have found that schizandra protects the liver against toxins. Problems with the liver and lead to immune disorders because of the build up of toxins. Schizandra has also been found to protect against the effects of alcohol in mice. Other studies have found this herb to have a mild regenerative effect on the liver. It is used in China to treat infectious hepatitis. It helps to protect the liver from damage and encourage liver regeneration after injury or illness.

Other herbs:
Dandelion

Burdock
Barberry

HERBS FOR HEALTHY KIDNEYS

The kidneys are another important filtering system for the body. Large quantities of blood pass through the body eliminating toxins in urine. They help the body maintain a constant and healthy environment by adjusting the body's electrolyte balance, manufacturing hormones that regulate blood pressure, controlling calcium metabolism and aiding in the production of red blood cells. Keeping the kidneys healthy is essential for a healthy body.

Parsley

Parsley is a powerful diuretic often used to treat kidney conditions. It inhibits the reabsorption of salt by body tissues increasing the diuretic activity of the kidneys. It helps to increase and improve urination allowing for toxins to be removed through the kidneys. One of the components found in parsley seeds is an ingredient used in a drug to treat urinary tract infections.

Yarrow

A volatile oil in yarrow known as azulene and related compounds have been shown in studies to have anti-inflammatory properties which may help relieve urination problems. It also helps regulate and improve the function of the liver.

Dandelion

Dandelion is a natural diuretic and contains a high potassium content. This helps the body replenish and stabilize potassium levels as they are depleted with many diuretics. It can be used to relieve water retention. Dandelion gently increases the urine flow while

keeping the potassium and electrolytes in balance. Studies in humans have shown that the rhizomes and roots increases the flow of bile which is beneficial for liver disorders, gallstones, jaundice, and the bile duct. Bitter substances found in dandelion root have been found to encourage the release of toxins.

Kelp

Kelp has been found to protect the body from the absorption of toxic chemicals. Sodium alginate found in kelp protects the body from radiation exposure and heavy metal toxicity. It helps the body remove toxic waste.

HERBS FOR LYMPHATIC AND BLOOD HEALTH

The lymphatic system is involved in collecting and removing toxic material from the body's connective tissue and delivering it to the lymph nodes. This allows for the immune system to function and break down offensive invaders. If the lymphatic system is not functioning properly, the immune system can be hindered in its activity.

The lymphatic system carries the lymph, a nearly clear fluid containing proteins, wastes, and other elements. Lymph comes from the interstitial fluid that surrounds the cells of the body, and brings them nourishment and removes wastes. The lymph travels in the lymphatic vessels, which lie right next to the blood vessels and eventually connect back to major veins.

Red Clover

It has been used traditionally on the blood, liver, lymphatic system, nerves and lungs. Herbalists consider it to be a blood cleanser and recommend this mild herb in formulas when using a cleansing program. The blood is important because of its job of carrying nutrients and oxygen through the red blood cells to the vital organs and tissue in the body.

Red Root

Red root has traditionally been used as a cleansing herb. It may work to help expedite the transfer of waste material from the lymph to the liver. It helps the liver to perform its vital function. It is often recommended by herbalists as a lymph cleanser.

Echinacea

Modern research has found echinacea to be an effective alterative and blood purifier. Extracts of echinacea root have been found to contain interferon-like properties. Interferon is produced naturally in the body to prevent viral infections.

Echinacea is used for many different ailments and as a blood purifier. It is known to fight chemical toxic poisoning in the body. It has been used as a treatment for candida yeast infections and also has the ability to kill fungus.

Echinacea is known to stabilize the white blood cell count in the body. It contains antiviral properties which are known to increase the activity of the leukocytes (white blood cells) allowing them to do their job of fighting and destroying toxic organisms that invade the body. It also is known to increase the red blood cell count which helps to remove waste from the body. It contains antiseptic properties helping to cleanse and reduce pain with external and internal injuries.

Other herbs:

- Mullein
- Sarsaparilla
- Burdock
- Kelp
- Pau d'Arco
- Butcher's broom
- Garlic

HERBS FOR HEALTHY SKIN

The skin is actually the largest organ of the body and the largest channel of elimination. The health of the skin is dependent on the health of the other

organs in the body. If they are running efficiently, the skin will be healthy. When the body is overloaded with toxins the liver, kidneys and gastrointestinal system cannot process and eliminate them fast enough. This puts excess burden on the skin which may lead to conditions such as acne, psoriasis, boils or rashes.

Red Clover

Red clover is a great blood detoxifier allowing for healthy skin. It is often recommended for cleansing programs.

Yellow Dock

Yellow dock has been found to be a good alternative, especially for chronic skin problems. It is useful for leprosy, psoriasis and cancer. Modern herbalists recommend yellow dock for anemia, as a blood purifier, liver congestion, and skin problems. It is also considered beneficial for toxemia, infections, lymph congestion, ulcers and wounds. It is considered one of the best blood builders in the herbal kingdom.

Burdock

Burdock is valued highly in the plant kingdom. It is used to purify the blood and strengthen the liver, kidneys, stomach and lungs. It contains volatile oils which are known to help clear the kidneys of excess wastes and uric acid, and burdock is used as a diuretic. It is used for skin problems such as acne, boils, psoriasis, and canker sores.

HERBS FOR THE COLON

Maintaining a healthy gastrointestinal system will help protect the liver and kidneys and other vital organs. The gastrointestinal system is involved in eliminating waste and toxins from the body. Keeping the colon healthy can protect the body from disease.

Psyllium

Psyllium, taken internally, is an excellent remedy for many problems of the digestive system. It can help prevent autointoxication which results in the reabsorption of toxins into the bloodstream. It helps to relieve the problem by removing the toxins when used over a period of time. It can help with any disease by protecting the colon and preventing toxins from being absorbed into the blood. Psyllium also works as a lubricant on the intestinal tract. Psyllium helps to overcome chronic constipation which is a common problem.

Cascara Sagrada

Cascara sagrada is often recommended as a natural laxative and colon cleanser. It contains chemicals that naturally stimulate the action of the colon improving elimination. It also works to increase bowel function and strengthen the colon.

Senna

Senna leaves are often used as a powerful laxative. It contains colon stimulating properties but should only be used in cases of severe constipation. Large amounts taken alone can cause intense cramping. Senna is often found in laxative combinations.

Other herbs:

Black walnut

Ginger

Garlic

Pumpkin seeds

Goldenseal

CLEANSING DIET

*A few days or weeks before beginning a cleansing diet, it is a good idea to eat only whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables to prepare the body.

*Eliminate all processed foods, coffee, tea, sugar, alcohol, tobacco and red meat.

*Add some of the cleansing herbs, combinations of

herbs or cleansing herbal teas.

A cleansing diet could consist of the following:

- *Herbs to aid the cleansing
- *First day eat fruit such as apples, berries, watermelon, pears, cherries and apricots. Do not eat bananas.
- *Second day drink all the herbal teas you want. Some

IN THE NEWS

suggestions are chamomile, raspberry, spearmint, hyssop, pau d'arco, and red clover blends.

- *Third day eat all the vegetables you want. Eat them raw or steamed.
- *Fourth day make a pan of vegetable broth using cauliflower, cabbage, onion, green pepper, parsley or whatever is on hand. Season with natural or vegetable salt.

MORE RESEARCH ON FEVERFEW

Studies have been ongoing as to the benefits of feverfew in relieving migraine pain since the 1970's. The latest clinical study confirms the beneficial effects of feverfew. Researchers in Israel reported on a clinical trial involving 57 individuals, none of which had ever tried feverfew. Half of the group were given the feverfew supplement while the others a placebo. Those taking the feverfew reported a significant reduction in migraine pain and accompanying symptoms such as sensitivity to light, vomiting and nausea. The treatment was switched during the study giving the placebo group the feverfew supplements. Again, the group taking the feverfew had a reduction in migraines (D. Palevitch, G. Earon and R. Carasso. "Feverfew as a prophylactic treatment for migraine: A double-blinded placebo-controlled study." *Phytotherapy Research*, 1997, 11 (7): 506-11).

EXERCISE MAY PREVENT DIABETES

Exercise is important for health and prevention of illness. One study lead by Michael Brown of the University of Pittsburgh followed 12 overweight women who had a condition which often leads to diabetes. Exercise has been thought to help prevent diabetes, but just how much was necessary has not been determined. Exercise such as brisk walking practiced for 30 minutes for at least four days a week is thought to help.

In a related study reported by CNN March, 4,

RECIPES

1998, walking was found to help improve insulin sensitivity. Elizabeth Mayer-Davie of the University of South Carolina reported the result of her research. The study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* followed 1,400 women between the ages of 40 to 69. Some had normal blood sugar levels and others had a mild form of diabetes. Those who exercised moderately and regularly were less likely to have impaired insulin-using capacity which is involved with diabetes.

Luscious Green Salad

- 1 bunch green leafy lettuce, washed and in pieces
- 1 small red onion, sliced thin
- 1 can mandarin oranges
- 1/2 cup sliced almonds
- 1 cup red grapes
- 1 avocado, sliced

Mix all ingredients together and toss with a poppy seeds dressing or dressing of choice.

Chicken Salad

- 3 chicken breasts, cooked and diced

BOOK REVIEW

1/2 cup cooked brown rice
 1/2 cup sliced almonds
 1/2 cup green onions, chopped
 1/2 cup celery, chopped
 1 cup red grapes
 1 small can unsweetened, crushed pineapple, drained
 1 cup non-fat sour cream
 1 T. mayonnaise.

Mix ingredients together and serve in a pita, on bread or over green leaf lettuce.

FPO PUT COVER HERE

Losing weight is a national obsession. This obsession has lead many to search for any means of shedding the pounds. Pharmaceutical companies have come forward with prescription drugs to hasten the weight loss process. Some have turned out to be a disaster causing severe and life threatening side effects. The results have not proven to be worth it, and many products have been taken off the market. But there are other medications ready to take their place. Is the answer really found in the form of a drug?

Nature's Alternative to Phen-Fen, written by Rita Elkins, is an exciting book written for those individuals interested in finding natural compounds to aid in

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