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24

EAT TO CLEANSE YOUR BODY

Surviving on juice isn't the best way to give your system a boost. Hit your system's reset button healthfully with this plan.



A whole-foods diet really is your ticket to better health.

THESE DAYS, you can't swing an organic celery stalk without hitting someone on a juice cleanse. Touted as a natural way to detox your system, jump-start weight loss, and inoculate yourself against disease, the gem-colored beverages have expanded beyond Whole Foods to places like Safeway, Groupon and even the Williams-Sonoma catalog. According to industry data, the kale-and-whatever cocktails make

up a \$5 billion business, expected to grow by 8 percent this year.

Companies selling this bottled bliss (typically for about \$65 per day) promise a clear head, clear skin and *really* clear bowels. But plenty of women who set out to detoxify their body one sip at a time find themselves encountering the Seven Dwarves of Cleansing: Dizzy, Cranky, Weak, Starving, Bored, Poopy and Social Outcast. Health experts

are rarely fans, mostly due to the juices' inadequate calorie contents; lack of satiating protein, fat and fiber; and soaring candy-bar-esque sugar levels.

Here at *Natural Health*, we're all for ramping up your veggie intake and knocking junk food out of your diet. Learn why liquid fasts might not be the wisest way to do it—as well as a better approach for you to help your body perform at its best.

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26

Chow
on these
before
they hit
the juicer.

YOUR BODY ON A CLEANSE

Brooke Kalanick, a licensed naturopathic doctor in New York City, says patients ask her about cleanses daily. "People are drawn to them because they're not losing weight and want to try something drastic," she says. Some women do feel better post-cleanses, Kalanick acknowledges, but "that's because they aren't eating garbage for those seven days. Others have a low-level intolerance for gluten, soy or dairy, and now that they've eliminated them from their diet, they're no longer experiencing the brain fog, bloating, insomnia, acne or depression that can occur. There's nothing magic in juice." As for the long-term payoff? "I've never met anyone who went on a seven-day juice cleanse and then decided, 'I'm never eating sugar or drinking alcohol again,'" Kalanick says. "You almost always wind up going back to your old ways."

Nutritionists cringe at the labels of most juices (even green ones, often made more palatable with apple or citrus), since they're loaded with sugar but lack the fiber, protein or fat needed to blunt the ensuing blood-sugar crash. "If the cleanse involved eating an actual apple instead of drinking juices you would be satisfied longer," says Jen Satchek, Ph.D., an associate professor of nutrition at Tufts University in Boston and coauthor of *Thinner This Year*. Pulverizing and pressing fruit lowers the quality of any fiber left behind, making it easier for your body to absorb the calories. The result: "Your blood sugar rises and falls faster, your brain thinks you still need 300 calories and your hunger grows," she explains. A juice cleanse effectively forces you into starvation mode, priming you for weight gain once you return to real food.

What about the claims that cleansing gives you a mental boost? "You may feel high, like after a good run, at the end of a cleanse, but it's because you're operating on pure sugar, so your body has to pump out a lot of cortisol and adrenaline to keep your blood sugar stable," Kalanick says.

DO YOU NEED TO DETOX?

Juice cleanses are thought to drive out toxins. While it's true that pesticides, air pollutants, medication waste and alcohol do call our systems home, we already have an incredibly efficient detox program: hitting the loo. "Your kidneys filter your blood to

remove waste, and your liver breaks down harmful chemicals,” explains Robynne Chutkan, M.D., an integrative gastroenterologist in Washington, D.C., and author of *Gutbliss: A 10-Day Plan to Ban Bloat, Flush Toxins, and Dump Your Digestive Baggage*. “Urinating cleanses—or detoxifies—our bladder, and defecating cleanses our bowels.”

Unfortunately, she says, the Standard American Diet of high-carb, high-fat processed foods and scant plant protein and fiber overburdens the body’s inherent detox factor, resulting in difficult-to-pass bowel movements. Ironically, juice’s lack of fiber and

protein makes it tricky for the body to form stool, which is why cleansers find themselves running to the bathroom with pre-colonoscopy frequency.

Regular exercise is another mode of detoxification, in a sense, because it stimulates metabolism, helps burn fat for fuel, and allows the kidney and liver to cleanse at a higher capacity, says Satchek. “Plus, you feel good afterward and want to refuel with healthy foods.” Exercising on a cleanse? Not good. “The average 5-foot-5-inch, 150-pound female needs 1,400 calories just to lay around and keep her heart beating and brain functioning,” says Rebecca Scritchfield, RDN, founder of Capital Nutrition Group, in Washington, D.C. “The typical cleanse clocks in at fewer calories than that, so if you work out, you’ll feel light-headed and struggle.”

None of us would need a detoxification program if we weren’t “toxing” in the first place, Chutkan explains. Better to fill your tank with a plant-based diet heavy on green vegetables, beans, raw nuts and healthy fats, plus plenty of water, supplemented by regular exercise. “Do that 80 percent of the time and you can ‘cheat’ the other 20,” she says. “Most people develop digestive issues because they’re not getting enough phytonutrients from plants, not because of a slice of pizza here and there.”

A COMMONSENSE CLEANSE

If the challenge and fresh-start promise of a cleanse still hold appeal, Kalanick recommends a 30-day nutrition reset instead, focusing on eliminating gluten, sugar, dairy, soy and alcohol. “Go organic for produce, and choose hormone-free and free-range with proteins. It’s not as easy as buying bottled juice, but it’s a clean, sustainable diet with loads of fiber and protein, minus the big allergens and ‘toxins,’” she says. “Plus, you’ll emerge with tools that you can continue to rely on post-cleanse: a knack for making creative, delicious salads or the realization that gluten makes you feel foggy and irritable.”

To tap into juice cleansing’s main benefit—a liquid injection of nutrient-packed produce—feel free to grab a beverage every now and then, especially on days when your eating hasn’t been stellar. Avoid the sugar-laden cashew-agave-coconut varieties and seek out a veggie-based combo with less than 15 grams of sugar per 8-ounce serving (like Evolution Fresh, available at Starbucks, or Love Grace juices, available at lovegracefoods.com), or make a smoothie at home, tossing in just one fruit, like a kale-celery-apple-lemon-parsley mix. “It’s a good way to get cupfuls of greens into you,” says Scritchfield.

A bowlful of veggies and fish is just as clean as juice (and more satisfying).



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5 DELISH DAYS TO OPTIMAL HEALTH

Forget the cleanse: Lose weight, keep it off, and feel *refreshed* with these miracle meals designed by Jen Sacheck, Ph.D., coauthor of *Thinner This Year*. The plan follows the 50/20/20/10 guideline: 50 percent produce, 20 percent grains, 20 percent protein and 10 percent healthy fats.

Your meal plan

• DAY 1

BREAKFAST

Fruity Crepe Prepare a 3-egg-white omelet stuffed with ¼ cup each blueberries and sliced strawberries; top with ¼ teaspoon cinnamon. Serve with 1 slice whole-grain toast and 1 teaspoon all-fruit apple butter.

LUNCH

Mushroom Barley Soup Bring 2 cups vegetable stock and ½ cup barley to a boil. Sauté ½ cup mushrooms for 4 minutes over high heat in a drop of olive oil and add to broth with 2–3 chopped kale leaves. Simmer 10 minutes and serve.

DINNER

Tropical Cod Cover 6-ounce cod fillet with mixture of 1 teaspoon canola oil, 1 teaspoon flaked coconut and ½ teaspoon ground almonds; bake 15 minutes at 350°F. Serve with black-bean mango salsa: ½ cup black beans with ¼ cup corn kernels and ¼ cup diced mango dressed with 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar and ½ tablespoon olive oil.

• DAY 2

BREAKFAST

Secret Smoothie Combine 1 medium banana cut into chunks, 1 cup frozen or fresh blueberries, 1 handful baby spinach leaves, ½ cup cranberry or pomegranate juice and 3–4 ice cubes. Blend until smooth and serve.

LUNCH

Tuna, Avocado and Tomato Salad Toss 5 ounces chunk light tuna packed in water with ½ small cubed avocado, ½ teaspoon pepper, ½ tablespoon freshly chopped dill, 1 tablespoon crumbled feta cheese and juice of half a lemon. Scoop out a medium-size tomato to create a shell and stuff with tuna mixture. Serve with 1 cup red and green grapes.

DINNER

Vegetable Stir-Fry Sauté 1 cup broccoli, 1 cup sliced white mushrooms and ½ cup shelled edamame with 1 tablespoon olive oil and 3 tablespoons tamari over medium heat. Serve with 1 cup steamed brown rice.

• DAY 3

BREAKFAST

Sweet Grits Mix 1 cup yellow grits (or farina) with 1 teaspoon real maple syrup and 1 tablespoon raisins. Serve with ½ pink grapefruit.

LUNCH

Waldorf Lettuce Wraps Toss 4–6 ounces cooked cubed skinless chicken breast with ¼ cup low-fat plain yogurt, 1 tablespoon raisins, ½ cup diced apple and 1 tablespoon chopped walnuts. Fill 2 large romaine leaves with mixture and serve.

DINNER

Asian-Inspired Chicken Slaw Shred 4–6 ounces cooked skinless chicken breast into a bowl. Toss with ½ cup thinly sliced red pepper, ½ cup shredded carrots, 1 cup shredded napa cabbage, 1 tablespoon chopped cashews and ¼ cup mandarin oranges, drained and rinsed. Mix 1 tablespoon low-sodium soy sauce, 1 tablespoon rice wine vinegar and ½ tablespoon toasted sesame seed oil; toss with slaw to coat and serve on top of ½ cup steamed brown rice.

• DAY 4

BREAKFAST

Easy Oatmeal Heat up 1 cup oatmeal and top with ½ cup blueberries. Serve with 1 medium banana.

LUNCH

Curried Sweet

Potato Bake a medium sweet potato for 45 minutes and top with ¼ cup non- or low-fat plain Greek yogurt, ½ teaspoon curry powder and 2 drops hot sauce. Drizzle with a squeeze of fresh lime juice and serve with a side of mixed greens.

DINNER

Dill Salmon In a sauté pan, poach 4–6 ounces Alaskan wild-caught salmon with ½ cup veggie broth and ½ cup good dry white wine (the alcohol cooks off), 2 tablespoons fresh dill leaves and 3–4 whole peppercorns, uncovered, for about 10 to 12 minutes. Serve with 1½ cups roasted halved Brussels sprouts (toss with 1 teaspoon olive oil and roast at 425°F for about 20 minutes) and ½ cup brown rice.

• DAY 5

BREAKFAST

Southwest Tofu

Scramble Sauté ½ small onion, diced, in 1 teaspoon olive oil until just soft. Add 4 ounces light-firm or extra-firm tofu, crumbled, and ½ cup veggie salsa and cook for 2 to 3 minutes, until heated through; season with pepper and serve.

LUNCH

The Big Salad

Toss 3 cups mixed baby greens with ¼ cup each shredded carrots, diced celery and chopped broccoli, 1 tablespoon dried cranberries, 1 ounce crumbled feta and

1 tablespoon chopped nuts of any kind; drizzle with ½ tablespoon olive oil.

DINNER

Cauliflower-Millet Mash With Tomato Sauce (2 main-course servings)

Bring ½ cup millet and 2 cups cauliflower florets to a boil in 3 cups low-sodium chicken broth for about 12 minutes until millet looks fluffy. Remove from heat and let stand 12 to 15 minutes; then mash until airy. Top with ½ cup sugar-free tomato sauce. (One easy option: Simmer one 28-ounce can crushed tomatoes with 1 tablespoon Italian seasoning and 1 tablespoon capers in brine until heated through.)



ENJOY 2 SNACKS A DAY!

- Small apple; low-fat cheese stick
- 1 cup baby carrots; 3 tablespoons hummus
- 1 banana; 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- 23 raw almonds
- ¼ cup black beans, 1 tablespoon each salsa and cottage cheese and ⅓ cup diced avocado; 4 celery stalks
- 20 frozen grapes

SIP ON THESE!

- Flat or fizzy water with lemon
- Unsweetened iced tea
- Decaf green or black tea
- Decaf coffee

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