



Natural Health Center, LLC

compassionate care changing lives

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Liver Support Diet

Background

The liver is thought of as the major organ of elimination in the body, acting as a “filter” for, and detoxifier of, all the toxins that enter or are created in the body. The skin, the kidneys, the intestines/colon and the lungs also assist in eliminating toxins from the body. There’s no denying that the liver has a really big and important job to do, given the quantity and variety of toxins that it must handle.

A huge number of biochemical reactions happen there in order for the detoxification process to occur. For example, the amino acid **cysteine**, along with **glutamate** and **glycine**, make up the **glutathione** molecule, which is an important antioxidant necessary for the protection of proteins. The mineral **selenium** is also essential for the synthesis of glutathione. Glutathione is used by the liver to detoxify many compounds including formaldehyde, acetaminophen (Tylenol) and benzopyrene, just to name a few. It is also involved in transport across cell membranes, cell membrane integrity, cancer prevention, synthesis of fatty acids and bile acid metabolism.

Symptoms of liver overload include poor digestion, bloating, nausea, constipation or other bowel irregularity, unpleasant mood changes, depression, poor concentration, forgetfulness, onset or worsening of allergic conditions (hay fever, skin rashes, asthma), headaches, hypertension, fluid retention, blood glucose dysregulation, decreased tolerance for smells/fatty foods/alcohol, joint aches and pains, excessive perspiration and unpleasant body odor.

As the detoxification process occurs, the biochemistry of the body undergoes some changes which can result in a number of unpleasant, but harmless symptoms such as cold intolerance, unpleasant sweat and skin rashes, coated tongue and offensive breath, nausea, headache, bowel changes and weight loss. Some people feel as if they have the flu. The more severe the symptoms, the more it is clear that detoxification is needed.

Nutritional and Dietary Considerations

Note: The dietary considerations listed below include foods to which some individuals may have food allergies, intolerances and sensitivities. In those cases, those foods should be avoided. These dietary considerations should be modified to meet your personal dietary needs. Persons on medications should not take any of the herbal teas or juice and herbal blends without first consulting your physician/clinician regarding potential interactions. Your physician/clinician can prescribe a comprehensive detoxification protocol that meets your specific medical and personal needs.

Foods to Avoid

All processed and refined foods, sugar, refined salt, coffee, tea, alcohol, all drugs and synthetic vitamins and herbal supplements (except as directed by your physician), excessive or oxidized fats and oils, non-organic meats or poultry, eggs or dairy products, farm-raised fish, heavy

starches (potatoes, rice, bread, cereal), heavy proteins (animal products), strong culinary spices, condiments except lemon juice and sea salt.

Foods To Include

Green, leafy vegetables (kale, collards, mustard greens, spinach, dandelion greens, etc.) along with the cooking liquid, cruciferous vegetables (cabbages, broccoli, cauliflower, radishes, etc.), endive, cucumbers, beets, carrots, garlic, onions, artichokes, sprouted seeds, all raw and juiced vegetables.

Nettle and Cabbage Soup (Recipe)

Heat 1 Tablespoon olive oil in a saucepan. Add 1 chopped large onion and cook until soft. Add 2 sliced leeks and 2 cups chopped cabbage, cover and cook over low heat for 10 minutes. Add 5 cups of vegetable or chicken stock, salt and freshly ground pepper to taste, bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 20 minutes, adding 2 handfuls of nettle tops for the last few minutes. Remove from the heat and blend. Add 2 Tablespoons chopped fresh parsley or cilantro before serving. Garnish with grated nutmeg. (4 servings)

Juices and Teas to Include

Red beet and carrot juice (1/2 cup once daily)

Liver cleansing and tonic tea: An equal mixture of burdock root, dandelion root, Echinacea root, Oregon grape root, yellow dock root and sarsaparilla

Make a decoction by simmering 1 Tablespoon of the herbal mix in two cups of water for 20 minutes, covered. Strain. Drink once daily.

Live Up Your Liver Juice (a.k.a. Digestive Jubilation Brew)

Juice 1 handful of fresh dandelion leaves (organic), several sprigs each of parsley, fennel and cilantro, one 1-2 inch section of fresh ginger root, 2-3 carrots, 1-2 stalks of celery and 1 small beet. Add 1/2 teaspoon turmeric, stir well and enjoy immediately. Drink only 4-6 ounces at a time, sip slowly, and dilute with water if you find the taste or effect too strong. If you don't own a juicer, try dicing all the fresh vegetables and herbs. Place them in a blender; add 2 cups water and blend on high speed for 2 minutes. Strain out the pulp, refrigerate the juice. If you wish, add small amounts of any of the following fresh ingredients: burdock root, whole chickweed plant, mugwort or yarrow tips, nettle tips, thistle greens, young plantain leaves

Water

In general, drink at least 64 ounces daily. Rule of thumb: one-third your body weight in ounces plus an extra 8 ounces for each cup of coffee or tea, or for each half hour of exercise

Resources

1. Brown, Kathleen. Herbal Teas: 101 Nourishing Blends for Daily Health and Vitality. 1999. Storey Books, Inc.
2. Marz, Russell B. Medical Nutrition From Marz, 2nd edition. 1999. Omni-Press.
3. McIntyre, Anne. Drink To Your Health: Delicious Juices, Teas, Soups and Smoothies That Help You Look and Feel Great. 2000. Gaia Books.
4. Pollack, Jeanine. Healing Tonics. 2000. Storey Books, Inc.
5. Scott-Moncrieff, Christina. Detox: Cleanse and Recharge Your Mind, Body and Soul. 2001. Collins and Brown Ltd.