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What Is a Full-body Detox?



Medically reviewed by [Meredith Goodwin, MD, FAAFP](#) — Written by [Gavin Van De Walle, MS, RD](#) — Updated on May 2, 2025

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A full-body detox typically involves following a diet to remove toxins from the body. However, your body is well-equipped to eliminate these harmful substances without dietary intervention or supplementation.

The term toxin can refer to pollutants, synthetic chemicals, heavy metals, and processed foods, which can negatively affect health.

Many diets and supplements claim to ‘detoxify’ the body from these substances, but they are typically unsupported by research. The body ‘detoxifies’ itself naturally and doesn’t actually require special diets or expensive supplements to eliminate toxins.

Learn more about the misconceptions around detox diets and ways that you can support the body’s natural detoxification processes.

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Common misconceptions about detoxing


Detox diets often involve the use of:

- laxatives

- diuretics
- vitamins
- minerals
- teas
- foods thought to have detoxing properties

The term “toxin” in the context of detox diets is loosely defined. It typically includes pollutants, synthetic chemicals, heavy metals, and processed foods, which can negatively affect health.

However, popular detox diets rarely identify the specific toxins they aim to remove or the mechanism by which they supposedly eliminate them.


Moreover, [no evidence](#)  supports the use of these diets for toxin elimination or sustainable weight loss.

Your body has a sophisticated way of eliminating toxins that involves the liver, kidneys, digestive system, skin, and lungs.

Still, only when these organs are healthy can they effectively eliminate unwanted substances.

So while [detox diets](#) don't do anything that your body can't naturally do on its own, you can optimize your body's natural detoxification system.

1. Limit alcohol

Excessive drinking [can severely](#)  damage your liver function by causing fat buildup, inflammation, and scarring.

When this happens, your liver cannot function adequately and perform its necessary tasks — including filtering waste and other toxins from your body.

Limiting or abstaining entirely from alcohol is one of the best ways to keep your body's detoxification system running strong.

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2. Focus on sleep

Ensuring adequate **quality sleep** each night is a must to support your body's health and natural detoxification system.

Sleeping **allows** your brain to reorganize and recharge itself, as well as remove toxic waste byproducts that accumulate throughout the day.

Not getting enough quality sleep is **connected** to short- and long-term health consequences, such as:

- stress
- anxiety
- high blood pressure
- heart disease,
- type 2 diabetes
- obesity

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends getting at least **seven hours** of quality sleep each night.

If you have **difficulties staying or falling asleep** at night, lifestyle changes like sticking to a sleep schedule and limiting blue light before bed can help.

3. Drink more water

Water does so much more than quench your thirst. It helps to:

- regulate body temperature
- lubricate joints
- aid digestion and nutrient absorption
- detoxify your body by removing waste products.

Your body's cells must continuously repair themselves to function optimally and break down nutrients for your body to use as energy.

However, these processes **release wastes** in the form of urea and carbon dioxide, which can cause harm if they build up in your blood.

Water transports these waste products, efficiently removing them through urination, breathing, or sweating. So staying properly hydrated is important for detoxification.

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4. Reduce your intake of sugar and processed foods

People often attribute sugar and processed foods to many of today's public health crises.

[Research](#) links high consumption of sugary and highly processed foods to obesity and other chronic diseases, such as:

- heart disease
- cancer
- diabetes

These diseases hinder your body's ability to naturally detoxify by harming organs that play an important role, such as your liver and kidneys.

You can keep your body's detoxification system healthy by consuming sugary food in moderation.

Replacing junk food with healthier choices like fruits and vegetables is also a healthy way to reduce consumption.

5. Eat antioxidant-rich foods

Antioxidants protect your cells against damage caused by molecules called free radicals. Oxidative stress is a condition that results from the excessive production of free radicals.

Your body naturally produces these molecules for cellular processes, such as digestion. However certain factors can cause your body to produce excessive free radicals, [such as](#):

- drinking alcohol
- smoking tobacco
- eating a low nutrient diet
- being exposed to pollutants

These molecules cause damage to a range of cells. [Research](#) suggests that free radical damage plays a role in conditions such as:

- dementia
- heart disease
- liver disease
- asthma
- certain types of cancer

Eating a diet rich in antioxidants can help your body counter oxidative stress caused by excess free radicals and other toxins that increase your disease risk.

Focus on getting antioxidants from food and not supplements. Taking too many antioxidant supplements may increase your risk of certain diseases.

» [LEARN MORE: Foods high in antioxidants](#)

6. Stay active

[Regular exercise](#) — regardless of body weight — is [associated](#) with a longer life and a reduced risk of many conditions and diseases, including:

- type 2 diabetes
- heart disease
- high blood pressure
- certain cancers

The CDC recommends aiming to do at least [150–300](#) minutes a week of moderate intensity exercise, such as brisk walking, or 75–150 minutes a week of vigorous intensity physical activity, such as running.

Frequently asked questions

What is the best way to detox your body?

Your body naturally clears itself of toxins. You can support the process and your overall health with some lifestyle measures, including:

- avoiding or limiting alcohol
- getting enough sleep
- drinking enough water
- eating antioxidant-rich foods

How can I detox my whole body at home?

Your body has a sophisticated way of eliminating toxins that involves the liver, kidneys, digestive system, skin, and lungs. Still, only when these organs are healthy can they effectively eliminate unwanted substances.

The bottom line

Detox diets are said to eliminate toxins, which supports improving health and promoting weight loss.

While these diets are popular, they are not necessary. Your body has its own highly efficient detoxification system.

That said, you can enhance your body's natural detoxification system and improve your overall health by staying hydrated, consuming less salt, staying active, and following an antioxidant-rich diet.



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SOURCES



HISTORY

Our experts continually monitor the health and wellness space, and we update our articles when new information becomes available.



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Dealing with a Detox Headache



Medically reviewed by [Seunggu Han, M.D.](#) — Written by [Scott Frothingham](#) —
[Updated on July 17, 2018](#)

[Causes](#) [Symptoms](#) [Remedies](#) [Takeaway](#)

What is a detox?

One type of detox, a [detoxification diet](#), is designed to eliminate [toxins](#) from your body. Commonly, they start with [fasting](#) — no food or drink. Then they progress to a strict [diet](#) of water, fresh fruit and vegetable juices, and raw fruits and vegetables. Sometimes the diet includes herbs and other [natural supplements](#).

Often these [detoxes](#) are targeted at eliminating a specific item from your daily routine, such as:

- [caffeine](#), such as from [coffee](#) or [energy drinks](#)
- [nicotine](#)
- [refined sugar](#)

While [detox](#) diets are commonly self-managed, there are also medically supervised detox programs for [alcohol](#) and [opiates](#) that can be the first step to addressing dependence. This type of detox should only be done with medical assistance.

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What is a detox headache?

When you're participating in a [detox](#), it's common to experience [headaches](#).

Detox [headaches](#) are often caused by your body's reaction to missing an item, such as sugar or [caffeine](#), that was habitually present. This may result in:

- a reduction in circulating hormones
- [toxins](#) such as chemical food additives or drugs leaching into your circulation to be eliminated
- a release of energy from [tension and stress](#)

Other detox symptoms

Along with [headaches](#), other symptoms during a [detox diet](#) may include:

- [fainting](#)
- [weakness](#)
- [dehydration](#)
- [hunger pangs](#)

When reading about these detoxes, the symptoms may be called various names including healing reactions, cleansing reactions, detox symptoms, and healing crises.

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Natural remedies for a detox headache

Depending on the nature of your [detox](#), you may not eliminate these [headaches](#) but there are ways to make them bearable. Techniques and remedies to try include:

Showering and bathing

- Take a [warm shower](#) to help wash away toxins followed by a cool shower to stretch your skin and close your pores.
- Consider time in a [sauna](#) to push toxins out through your skin. Follow it with a shower.
- Soak in a very warm, not hot, [Epsom salt bath](#). Use 1 to 2 cups in a standard size bathtub.

Breathing

Breathing can expel toxins and long, slow breathing may relax you and ease your [headache](#).

Drinking fluids

Dehydration can cause [headaches](#). Many [detox](#) diets suggest drinking lots of water to stay [hydrated](#) to help headaches and get rid of toxins.

If it fits with your detox plan, consider fresh juices and decaffeinated herbal teas. Many [detox diets](#) allow natural drinks as long as they don't contain added sugars, preservatives, or pasteurization. Some [herbal teas](#) to consider are:

- [ginger](#)
- [peppermint](#)
- [chamomile](#)
- [green tea](#)

Essential oils

- **Peppermint.** Many natural healers suggest that massaging a drop or two of [peppermint essential oil](#) into your forehead, temples, and back of your neck will [stimulate blood flow](#) and soothe [muscle contractions](#).
- **Lavender.** Lavender essential oil, according to many natural health practitioners, is a sedative and mood stabilizer. They suggest inhalation as the best way to take advantage of its effects for [headache treatment](#).

Since essential oils aren't regulated by U.S. Food and Drug Administration, be sure to buy oils from reputable sources. Also, if using topically, be sure to check if you're allergic by placing a test patch of oil on your skin and seeing if you have a reaction.

Herbs

Some herbs suggested for natural headache relief include:

- [feverfew](#)
- butterbur
- [coenzyme Q10](#)
- [St John's wort](#)
- [gingko](#)
- Siberian ginseng
- bacopa
- [licorice](#)

Meditation


Advocates of natural healing feel that [meditation](#) will help with detox [headaches](#) by relaxing your central nervous system, increasing oxygen supply to your brain, and reducing stress.

Takeaway

There are many natural ways to address a [headache](#) while you're on a detox diet. Consult with your doctor before beginning a detox program to make sure that it's a safe undertaking for you based on your current health.

If you have headaches or other symptoms that cause concern once you've started the detox, check in with your doctor to make sure that it's in your best interest to continue.

NOTE

According to the [U.S. National Institutes of Health](#) , there isn't any convincing evidence that self-managed detox diets or cleansing programs actually remove toxins from your body or improve your health.

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