

liver. In fact, the liver is our detoxification “control center,” as it processes and directs wastes to and through these organ channels for elimination:

- ◇ **Lymphatic system:** Removes and transports wastes from our cells
- ◇ **Colon:** Excretes solid wastes
- ◇ **Kidneys:** Filter and excrete acidic wastes in our urine
- ◇ **Lungs:** Filter and purify the air we breathe
- ◇ **Sinuses:** Primary channel for mucous removal
- ◇ **Skin:** Controls our body temperature and provides backup removal of acids and other wastes if the preferred channels become overloaded.

Unfortunately, not all of the excess toxins get excreted efficiently—some are circulated back into the bloodstream and others are stored in various body tissues, such as fat. This is in part due to the increasing levels of toxins we are exposed to, and it may be exacerbated by a lack of nutrients needed to fuel the detoxification process. Through the years, toxins can build up in fat, joints, the brain, and various other tissues, potentially leading to a variety of health concerns.

Perhaps it’s time for you to consider detoxifying—but how, with which product(s), and where do you find them? Stop by your local pharmacy and you will see row upon row of detox kits for sale, some with unpronounceable ingredients, and all of them touting best, fastest, easiest, or newest! Or simply look at the magazines in the checkout line at the grocer to see the detox miracle of the month recipe listed on the covers.

Before attempting to self-prescribe your own detox program, here are some important considerations:

- ◇ Research has substantiated that an individual’s ability to detoxify substances to which they are exposed varies tremendously.
- ◇ No two people have exactly the same dietary needs or health problems.
- ◇ A single detox program is not suitable for everyone.
- ◇ Herbal and vitamin supplements, including over-the-counter detox kits, are not regulated by the FDA.
- ◇ Herbal and vitamin manufacturers are not required to adhere to medical standards.
- ◇ Will the program provide healthy nutrition while eliminating excess toxins?
- ◇ Are the needed foods and liquids easy to find in your local area?
- ◇ Is the program simple to follow?
- ◇ Will the detox program fit your lifestyle?
- ◇ How can you expect to feel during the program?

“A gentle, safe, and effective detox program, properly administered, can do wonders for the body,” Dr. Roodman says. “Our patients report that their detox programs helped them sleep better, have more energy, think more clearly, and have an overall general feeling of vibrancy. And, often, digestion improved too.”

To have the most successful outcome, each detox patient at Advanced Wellness Centre answers an extensive detox questionnaire. Their answers help create an individualized detox program based on each patient’s needs, lifestyle, and health condition.

“Our programs are clinically based, using high quality ingredients along with a realistic, real-world food plan to maximize detox outcomes,” Dr. Lowry adds.

Below are some healthy guidelines to use no matter what detox method you choose – medical, over the counter, or do-it-yourself:

- ◇ Always consult a physician before proceeding if you have any doubts about your health status.
- ◇ Cut down your caffeine intake throughout a week before starting a detox to avoid caffeine withdrawal headaches.
- ◇ Drink lots of water (at least 2 quarts daily) to help flush your system and aid in toxin removal.
- ◇ Don’t detox for too long (one to two weeks is ideal). **Note: It can be longer if medically administrated.**
- ◇ Base your diet around a wide variety of seasonal (ideally organic) vegetables. Add whole grains – brown rice, millet, quinoa – and seasonal fruit.
- ◇ Include some oily fish (if you dislike fish, substitute organic, grass-fed chicken). If you are vegetarian, nuts and seeds will provide protein (modest amounts of which are vital for the detox process).
- ◇ Use a little organic extra virgin olive oil for cooking. Use cold-pressed seed oils for dressings. You can add herbs and spices liberally to add flavor.
- ◇ If you have any significant reactions or feel ill, consult your doctor immediately.

Once you have completed your chosen program, keep it healthy! Choose to continue your healthy habit of eating good-for-you foods to keep your “new and improved system” at its best!

Editor’s note: Susie Galvez is a Richmond-based beauty, image, and wellness writer, speaker, and author of nine books. To learn more about Susie, go to [www.SusieGalvez.com](http://www.SusieGalvez.com)