

BRAIN HEALTH BOOST



Do Detoxes and Cleanses Work to Rid Your Body of Toxins?

*The Brain Health Initiative (BHI) is working to develop brain healthy communities, creating a culture that promotes brain health protective factors and decreases risk factors, thereby improving brain health, optimizing brain performance, and preventing and fighting brain illness across the lifespan for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond. **Today we look at the effectiveness of detoxification, cleanses, and fasting as ways to restore optimal health.***

If you may not always feel like it, but you are already in possession of one of the world's most efficient detoxification units: your body. The liver, kidneys and intestines do most of the heavy lifting, sifting out harmful substances on a continual basis. The lymphatic and circulatory systems detoxify cells, and the lungs and skin play their roles in keeping the body and brain clean.

But there is a wellness movement afoot to help a body out with detoxes, cleanses, and fasting, promising health benefits with the understanding that it's good practice to sweep out toxins that may be accumulating in the brain and body due to poor diet, lack of sleep, stress, or disease.

There are several types of cleanses. Following are the broad categories:

- **Colon cleansing.** Water and other substances, like coffee or herbs, are flushed through the colon via a tube.
- **Detox diets.** These are restrictive diets that last a limited amount of time and consist mostly of liquified vegetables, fruit juices, and spices.
- **Fasts.** Periodic breaks from the usual diet, which can include toxins, synthetic chemicals and other poisons, are designed to allow the digestive system to reset.

But do detoxes, cleansing and fasting work? Advocates of cleanses tout several benefits: increase in energy level, weight loss, reduced inflammation, improved circulation, and more. But according to a [Harvard Health report](#), reviews of detox diets and colonic cleanses found little clinical evidence to support the claims found in advertising. Plus, the claims made by the manufacturers of these products have not been evaluated by the U.S. Food and Drug

Administration. One review indicated that juicing and detox diets can cause weight loss because of low calorie intake but that they tend to lead to weight gain when a normal diet is resumed.

BHI's NeuroNutritionist and best-selling author, Dr. Uma Naidoo, said the spices, botanicals and herbs found in detox teas can support the brain's and body's natural self-cleansing process.

"Powerful in the food-as-medicine field and high in phytonutrients, herbs and spices have shown to improve mental and physical health; turmeric is highly anti-inflammatory and may improve anxiety, saffron has antidepressant benefits, rosemary improves memory and cognition, ginger helps with digestion, and green tea has shown to help the body prevent oxidative stress and promote natural detoxification," Dr. Naidoo said.

Dr. Naidoo stresses that these natural herbs and spices are not a magic potion that can be used to scrub the effects of a poor diet or bad lifestyle choices from the brain and body.

"Run from labels or headlines that say 'lose 20 pounds in 10 days' or 'detox your body in one week'," Dr. Naidoo said. "Those miraculous claims may be fake but more importantly maybe harmful for your physical and brain health."

WHAT YOU CAN DO TODAY TO PROTECT YOUR BRAIN HEALTH

If you want to try a detoxification or cleanse, these effective wellness activities can amplify the benefits. Try the following BHI tips:

- **SLEEP.** Good sleep is detoxification for the brain. Our brain rejuvenates and removes toxic waste products while we snooze.
- **DRINK FILTERED WATER.** Nothing flushes out our systems better than water. But make sure it's pure. You don't want to replace one toxin with another.
- **BE ON THE MOVE.** Incorporate some kind of movement every day to support your body's detoxification.
- **BRUSH UP ON MASSAGE.** Try five minutes of dry brushing, which is the use of a stiff-bristled brush for a body massage. It gets the lymphatic system moving.
- **TRUST YOUR GUT.** Dr. Naidoo suggests adding fermented food like kimchi, yogurt, and sauerkraut and prebiotics like oats, garlic, greens and fiber-rich vegetables to your diet to help your gut microbiome.
- **AVOID TOXINS.** Use non-toxic cosmetics and personal care items that don't release chemicals.

BE BRAIN HEALTHY and adopt a lifestyle that includes thoughts, behaviors, emotions, responses, and language that promote brain health protective factors:

- Stress resilience
- Nutrition
- Physical activity
- Sleep
- Social connection
- Emotional wellbeing

- Meaning and Purpose
- Cognitive stimulation and creativity
- Engaging with nature
- General health
- Positive impacts

About the Brain Health Initiative (www.brainhealthinitiative.org)

The Brain Health Initiative (BHI), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, uses a cutting-edge approach to protecting brain health, promoting brain performance, and preventing and fighting brain illness across the lifespan. The BHI is building brain healthy communities, cultures that foster brain health protective factors and address risk factors, thereby improving brain health and optimizing brain performance outcomes for the Florida Suncoast region and beyond. Join the ***Be Brain Healthy*** movement, ***because brain health matters, and lifestyle makes a difference.*** To view all Brain Health Boosts [click here](#).