



How to Cleanse the Liver

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Reviewed

Four Parts: [Drinking the Right Liquids](#) [Eating Healthy Foods](#) [Using Herbal Remedies](#) [Detoxifying Your Life](#)

The liver is the second largest organ in the human body and one of the most important, because it's responsible for filtering harmful toxins out of the bloodstream. There are medical programs to detoxify the liver, but there are also several natural, simple lifestyle changes you can make that will result in a clean, healthy liver.

Part
1

Drinking the Right Liquids

- 1 Minimize alcohol and caffeine intake.** Alcohol and caffeine are two of the biggest culprits that deposit toxins in your liver and keep it from functioning properly. Cleanse your liver by reducing your intake of alcohol and caffeinated beverages. Recent research however indicates that decaffeinated coffee may help lower elevated liver enzyme levels. Replace these beverages with non-alcoholic beverages to allow your liver to regenerate, flush itself clean and function properly. Read on to find out what liquids are good for the liver.
- 2 Drink lots of water.** Detoxify your liver and flush toxins out by drinking at least 2 quarts of water every day. Drinking lots of water will keep you hydrated, which naturally encourages cell regeneration. It will also allow the liver to filter out more toxins and residue, letting it work faster and increasing your energy level.
- 3 Add lemon to your diet.** Drink lemon juice in water or tea once a day. Lemon juice stimulates the liver's bile production to help push toxins out. It also prevents the buildup of gallstones and promotes digestion and liver function in the movement of gastric juices.
- 4 Drink green tea.** Green tea is rich in catechins, a type of plant antioxidant that boosts liver function and helps reduce fat storage in the liver.^[1]
- 5 Drink natural fruit smoothies.** Fruits like strawberries, blackberries, blueberries, and raspberries all enhance the health of the liver. These fruits have organic acids that lower sugar blood levels, and will help you to burn fat, decreasing your chances of fatty liver diseases.^[2]
- 6 Make your own juice fast.** Fasting is a sure-fire ways to cleanse the liver. Most fasts involve eating only fruits and vegetables, or drinking only fruit and veggie juices, for a certain period of time. There are many different cleanses out there--you have to pick one that is right for your body.
 - You should consider consulting a nutritionist or doctor before you embark upon a fast.

Part
2

Eating Healthy Foods

- 1 Avoid foods that will do damage to your liver.** Foods that are processed and contain lots of preservatives, fats and cholesterol can cause the liver to become congested and clogged with fat residue. Clean out your liver by avoiding processed or fatty foods to allow the liver to unblock itself and regenerate cells.^[3]
 - Avoid fast food. In particular, try to avoid deep fried food or preserved meat (such as sausage, bacon, corned beef, etc.)
 - Avoid bad fats. Fatty red meat, deep fried food, and processed fats should all be avoided, as they can clog up your liver. Processed fats include margarine, shortening, and hydrogenated oils.
 - Avoid artificial sweeteners, colorings, and preservatives. It is best to go the natural route when cleansing your liver.

2 Eat your vegetables. Certain vegetables contain nutrients like beta carotene that stimulate liver cells and protect the liver from toxins. Dark, leafy greens like spinach encourage cell growth and stimulate the liver, while beets protect bile ducts in the liver from toxin damage. Aim for 5 servings of vegetables daily and include those that contain liver-aiding nutrients.

- Greens that promote liver health include dandelion greens, bitter melon, arugula, mustard greens, chicory and spinach.

3 Up your garlic intake. Garlic has sulfur-containing compounds that activate liver enzymes that work to flush out any toxins that might be in your system. Garlic also contains allicin and selenium, two nutrients that protect the liver from damages caused by toxins. These two nutrients also aid in the detoxification process.^[4]

- If you can't stand the taste of garlic because you simply don't like it (or you're a vampire) you can purchase garlic supplements at your local health store.

4 Eat grapefruit. Grapefruit is rich in vitamin C and antioxidants, both of which promote a healthy liver cleanse. Grapefruit boosts detoxification enzymes in the liver and has a flavonoid compound known as naringenin which causes the liver to burn fat rather than store it. Be careful however, because large amounts of grapefruit can inhibit a liver enzyme called cytochrome P450, which can affect the way certain foods and drugs are broken down in the body.

5 Eat avocados twice a week. Avocados are delicious and have glutathione-producing compounds. These compounds help to prevent the liver from toxic overload.

6 Eat walnuts. Walnuts have high levels of l-arginine (an amino acid) glutathione, and omega-3 fatty acids which help to cleanse the liver of disease-causing ammonia. Extracts of their shells are used in many liver-cleansing formulas.^[5]

Part 3 Using Herbal Remedies

1 Use an herbal supplement. Natural herbs like burdock and dandelion root are all said to help rid the body of toxins while protecting liver cells and promoting healthy liver function. All can be found in capsule or tablet form and dandelion root also comes in some herbal teas. Adding these supplements to your daily diet may help cleanse your liver and regulate its function.

2 Use Soya Lecithin. Soya Lecithin granules contain phospholipids which help protect the liver^[6]. Soya Lecithin granules are available in most health food stores.

3 Increase your magnesium intake. Magnesium promotes bile production, which in turn promotes the cleansing of the liver. You can take magnesium supplements to increase your liver health.^[7]

- Another way to get your magnesium is by dissolving a tablespoon of Epsom salt in warm water and drinking this mixture once or twice a month. Epsom salt contains a high amount of magnesium.

4 Add turmeric to your diet. Turmeric boosts the liver's ability to produce bile, a key part of the liver-cleansing process. It has also been known to help regenerate damaged liver cells.^[8]

5 Start taking milk thistle supplements. Milk thistle promotes the growth and health of liver cells. Milk thistle contains silymarins, which are antioxidants that fight oxidation, a process that damages liver cells. It also enhances protein synthesis in the liver.

Part 4 Detoxifying Your Life

1 De-stress your life. Stressful situations release hormones and endorphins in the bloodstream, which, in turn, deposit toxins in the liver and slow it down. Eliminate stress in any areas of your life that you can.

- Consider anti-stress activities like yoga and meditation.

2 Use natural house cleaning products. When you expose yourself to chemicals, your liver has to work overtime to keep you healthy. Reduce the number of chemicals you are exposed to by using cleaning products made from natural ingredients. Also helps to use organic and natural products for you own personal hygiene.

3 Consider using an air purifier in your home. The more toxins in the air, the more toxins your liver has to remove from your body. Air purifiers are particularly good investments if you live in the city or near a highway, as cars deposit many toxins into the air.

4 Exercise as much as possible. Exercise helps you maintain a healthy body weight, which in turn lowers your risk of fatty liver disease. Exercise also improves the function of liver enzymes. However, excessive weight training is connected with elevated liver enzymes, which is why you should stop exercising 48 hours prior to a liver function test.

Community Q&A

Can I exercise while suffering from jaundice?

 Yes.
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How do I treat hepatitis B naturally?

 You can't. Once you catch it (virus), it is yours for life, just like a fever blister. You can do things to minimize the damage, the best defense is to be vaccinated against it before you catch it. Don't drink alcohol under any kind of circumstance, go easy on the medications you take (they are all processed by the liver and now you have the extra burden of the virus). Live clean as you can is the best thing you can do for yourself once infected. Eat healthy and exercise.
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I've just found out that the blood levels in my liver are high. What could be causing this? What can I do?

 My levels were high, and it was fatty liver disease. I changed my lifestyle, eat clean, and try to do detox and cleanses periodically. Don't panic and start searching wildly online because you're just going to get yourself worked up. Wait for your doctor to run whatever other tests are needed to determine what's going on with you.
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How much turmeric per day is advisable for liver cancer patients? Which is best, turmeric powder or fresh turmeric? Are turmeric tablets as effective as powder/fresh turmeric?

 2,000 mg is the maximum amount you should take. But generally, a teaspoon or two should be good. Fresh turmeric is good. Curcumin pills from a quality brand are also good (make sure they include pepper or piperine). If you choose pills, it's better to get curcumin pills than turmeric pills since you'll get more benefit out of them that way. Curcumin is the extract from turmeric that provides most of the beneficial properties. If you choose fresh turmeric or powder, make sure you use a little bit of pepper with it, which significantly increases its absorption. Oil or fat of any kind also helps with absorption.
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Sources and Citations

1. <http://www.nature.com/ijo/journal/v26/n11/abs/0802141a.html>
2. <http://www.liverdoctor.com/healthy-grocery-list-for-liver-lovers/>
3. <http://www.chewfo.com/diets/the-liver-cleansing-diet-by-sandra-cabot-what-to-eat-and-foods-to-avoid-food-list/>

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