

"liver tea" herbs are chicory, burdock and dandelion leaf/root (which has the added benefit of acting as a diuretic, stimulating urination). Bitter-tasting teas should be avoided by persons having gallstones as they may trigger gallstone symptoms.

What about toxins already in the body?

The liver and gut are the organs "filtering" the blood, but toxins stored in the body must first find their way into the bloodstream if they are to be filtered out. Toxins stored in the body are stored in fat tissue. When fat cells are broken down, toxins are released into the bloodstream, and can then be filtered for removal. Two simple ways to bring toxins from fat cells into circulation are aerobic exercise and fasting.

Aerobic exercise is exercise that uses fat for fuel. In order to use fat as exercise fuel, fat cells are broken down. Aerobic exercise is generally described as activity performed at 50 to 90% of a person's maximal heart rate, but a simple shortcut is that aerobic activity requires "mouth breathing". Your body does not begin "burning" fat immediately—this only begins after about 15 to 20 minutes of moderate activity. To burn fat, exercise at least 30 minutes at a time at a "mouth breathing intensity".

A second technique that can be used to stimulate your body to use fat as fuel is fasting. Intermittent fasting is a fasting technique that involves daily, 16 hour abstinence from food. Most people can achieve this by simply not eating after dinner, and having a "brunch" rather than breakfast the following day. Your body will use its stores of energy in approximately 12 hours, turning to fat to fuel itself for the remaining four hours.

Note: All of the above suggestions are safe for any age. Children will also benefit from a clean diet, optimal hydration with water, and lots of exercise. The exception to this would be intermittent fasting. Some children may not respond well to skipping breakfast, and, in my opinion, we do not want to impose discomfort on any child. Focusing on a clean breakfast, free from refined sugars and high in protein is best.

Cleansing with water

Three other simple techniques that can be used to increase movement of toxins from tissues into the blood, and movement of blood to the liver, guts and kidneys for "filtering" and excretion, are saunas, a technique called constitutional hydrotherapy and contrast showers. These therapies affectionately fall under the healing category of hydrotherapy (healing with water).

Each of these therapies are essentially a means of exposing your body to heat, followed by cold. (Sauna is not, as these days it typically involves exposure to hot temperature only. Traditionally though, sauna involves alternating between a hot room and an ice bath...or, better yet, an icy lake!)

Constitutional hydrotherapy involves exposing your body to alternating hot and cold temperatures using moistened towels. A constitutional hydrotherapy treatment requires the help of an assistant, but simply involves lying down and having the torso covered for five minutes with a towel that has been moistened with hot water, followed by having the torso covered for approximately 10

minutes with a towel that has been moistened with cold water. The process is repeated on the back.

A final, simple "hack" for flushing the tissues of toxins is to have contrast showers. Shower in hot water as usual (causing skin-reddening, but *not scalding*, 37 to 40 degrees Celsius) for up to five minutes, followed by less than one minute under cold water (uncomfortable, but tolerable, 13 to 18 degrees Celsius). Repeat three times and *always* end with the cold water. I know it doesn't sound fun, but it is invigorating!

In all these cases, initial exposure to heat followed by cold results in "hemoconcentration", which simply means an increase in blood concentration and movement of toxins and metabolic wastes.

These temperature-involving techniques should *not* be used by:

- » Young children as they may not be able to accurately and quickly communicate "too hot". Consider contrast showers in children over the age of 7.
- » Persons having heart disease, cancer, acute infections or nerve conditions that cause reduced ability to be aware of pain (e.g. diabetic neuropathy).

So, to get off to a great start to the season:

For one week:

- » Ensure you are having daily bowel movements
- » Eat a home-made, preferably organic, primarily vegetarian diet
- » Drink approximately three liters daily of water (or "cleansing teas")
- » Avoid alcohol and caffeine (coffee and caffeinated tea)
- » Exercise at a "mouth-breathing intensity" for at least 30 minutes at a time

If possible, add to the week:

- » Restrict eating to an eight-hour window (for most, between 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. will work best)
- » Sauna (the European way), have constitutional hydrotherapy treatments, or take contrast showers

Continue for up to three weeks if desired and enjoy the improved energy, mood, general wellness and inspiration experienced by countless others who cleanse as a part of their healthy lifestyle.

Have a great season. •