

## **“Detox” diets – are they really necessary?**

“Detox” is a very popular word these days. Everybody is on a “detox” diet, trying to rid their bodies from all hazardous toxins. “Detox” diets are especially popular after periods of excessive unhealthy eating like December holidays. But what does “detox” diet mean and is it really necessary for the body?

“Detox” is short for detoxification. The definition of detoxification according to the Oxford Concise Medical Dictionary is: “The process whereby toxic substances are removed or toxic effects are neutralized. It’s one of the functions of the liver.” Have you read the article on high protein diets? There we explained that the body has its own detoxification system namely the liver and the kidneys. They work 24 hours a day, seven days a week - like two loyal watch dogs. Always on the alert! Just keep this in mind when we continue the discussion on “detox” diets.

If you think about it carefully you will realize that not one “detox” diet demands the same eating plan for its users. They all differ! Some say you could only consume fruit, vegetables and water, others say you must consume a balanced meal but leave out caffeine and alcohol. There are also some diets that encourage you to use some herbal supplements in addition to your diet. Now which one is the correct “detox” diet? Not one of them! Rather substitute the word “detox” with healthy. Aren’t we all striving to be healthy self-confident individuals? Let me explain, why I started this argument.

First of all, we already have our own effective detoxification system that works day and night. If this wasn’t the case, we would all be dead instantly. Our bodies need to get rid of waste products all the time. Not only once or twice every year!

Secondly, let us talk about herbal supplements. They have their role and place in certain conditions, but should be used with discretion and as advised by a dietician; as it can poison the body and cause severe damage to the liver and kidneys.

What about fruits and vegetables? A normal healthy diet also promotes the increased consumption of fruit and vegetables. That is nothing new! The consumption of two liters water daily is also old news, and is anyway expected of somebody who lives healthily (it includes all drinks, like tea and coffee). This brings us to the use of caffeine and alcohol. No dietician in the world will tell you to consume coffee and alcohol unlimitedly. These substances are harmful to the body and if it can be used with consideration, the better! Another problem presenting from a “detox” diet is that of a too low energy intake. The body is then forced to break down muscles stores for energy. This, on the other hand, slows down metabolism and as you can think, the whole balance of the body is disturbed. You are busy shocking your system, and can even end up being a diabetic!!!

Being healthy is all about balance, and to go on a “detox” diet once or twice a year, disturbs the balance. You have to consume a healthy, balanced diet every day and trust your body’s natural detoxification systems to get rid of all the harmful waste products... They will as long as you don’t disturb the balance, and not try to short-circuit yourself!!