

A CONVERSATION WITH *k.d. lang*

# alive

CANADA'S NATURAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS MAGAZINE

*SPRING  
CLEANING  
for your body*

HOW TO CULTIVATE  
*calendula*

*eco*  
trends

AQUA  
*fit*

NUCLEAR  
POWER  
POLITICS

PLIGHT OF THE  
honeybee

PLASTIC  
PROS AND CONS

Emerald Lake Lodge

- asparagus with miso vinaigrette
- creamy morel soup
- braised elk osso bucco
- rhubarb upside-down cake

gardening  
*by the moon*



# Spring cleaning

*The benefits of detoxification*

Melina Roberts, ND

*Good health depends on our ability to effectively eliminate toxins. This is where a cleanse or detoxification program can help.*

Fatigue, headaches, muscle pain, indigestion, and constipation can all be symptoms of an overload of environmental toxins in the body. Heavy metals from aluminum cans, copper pipes, pesticides, cigarette smoke, dental fillings, paints, and cookware contaminate our bodies. Chemicals in cleaning products, food additives, and pesticides are other sources of toxins.

A detoxification or cleansing program helps the body safely open the systems of elimination to effectively rid itself of toxins that find their way into our bodies.

## GETTING STARTED

Your cleansing program should enhance the body's natural cleansing process, which includes the liver, kidneys, digestive system, lymphatics, and blood. Here's how these systems work together to keep the body healthy.

The lymphatic system filters fluid from the tissues and captures any toxins it finds. The toxins are then carried into the bloodstream, where they are transported to the liver and the kidneys, the primary organs of detoxification. Toxins are processed in the liver and kidneys and then eliminated through the digestive and urinary systems. An effective detoxification program supports each part of the body's natural elimination system.

*"Heavy metals from aluminum cans, copper pipes, pesticides, cigarette smoke, dental fillings, paints, and cookware contaminate our bodies."*

## KINDS OF CLEANSING PRODUCTS

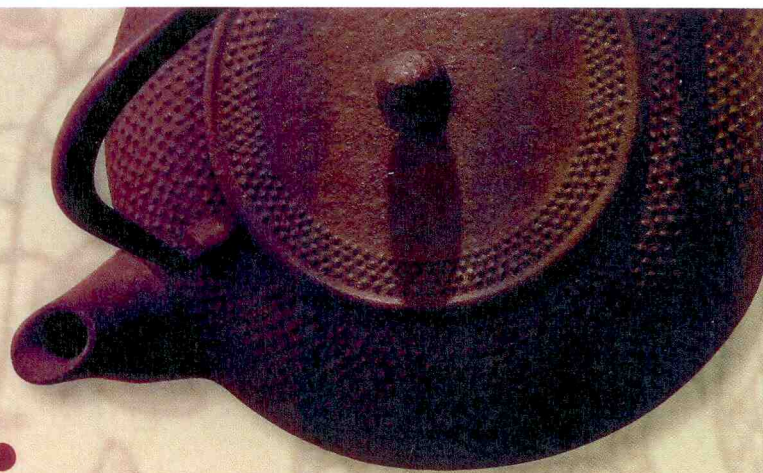
Many cleansing and detoxification products are available on the market today. Let's look at a few.

**Tea cleanses** involve drinking a specific herbal tea for one to two weeks. These cleanses are usually quite mild and well tolerated by the body. They help to gradually open

the detoxification pathways and support the organs of elimination. Although most tea cleanses do not specify an associated diet, it is important to eat healthy foods and drink at least 8 cups (2 L) of water throughout a tea cleanse. The disadvantage of tea cleanses is that dosages can vary greatly based on the strength of the tea and the contents of the dry herbs combined within the tea bag.

**Herbal cleanses** usually

involve taking a botanical tincture for three to seven days. Often the cleanse will focus on aiding a certain aspect of the detoxification process; for example, as a colon cleanse or a liver cleanse. However, a cleanse that focuses on only one aspect of the detoxification process can potentially lead to further health problems. The herbs used in the cleansing product are usually quite strong. They may be effective at mobilizing toxins from



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the targeted tissues, but if the pathways of elimination have not been properly opened and supported, there is no way for the toxins to be safely eliminated from the body. Thus the toxins may be moved from one area of the body to another.

**Homeopathic cleanses** use complex homeopathic remedies that are able to increase the blood supply to the organs of detoxification and open the pathways of elimination. They are best done in combination with a hypoallergenic diet and probiotics to support proper digestion. Often these cleanses will last for 30 days and are an excellent way to slowly and safely detoxify the body.

**Major cleanses** typically are comprised of herbal products combined within a kit. The best major cleanses are those that provide the liver with a constant supply of proteins, vitamins, and minerals. Therefore, detoxification is best combined with a diet that includes nutrient-rich, chemical-free foods, not a fast. It is also important to drink at least 8 cups (2 L) of clean, filtered water per day. The water helps to flush out toxins as well as rehydrate the cells and tissues. ➤

## UNDERSTANDING THE SIDE EFFECTS

How your body responds to a cleanse depends on your individual biochemistry. Many people begin to experience the health benefits of detoxification within a few days to a few weeks. Others take longer to notice results.

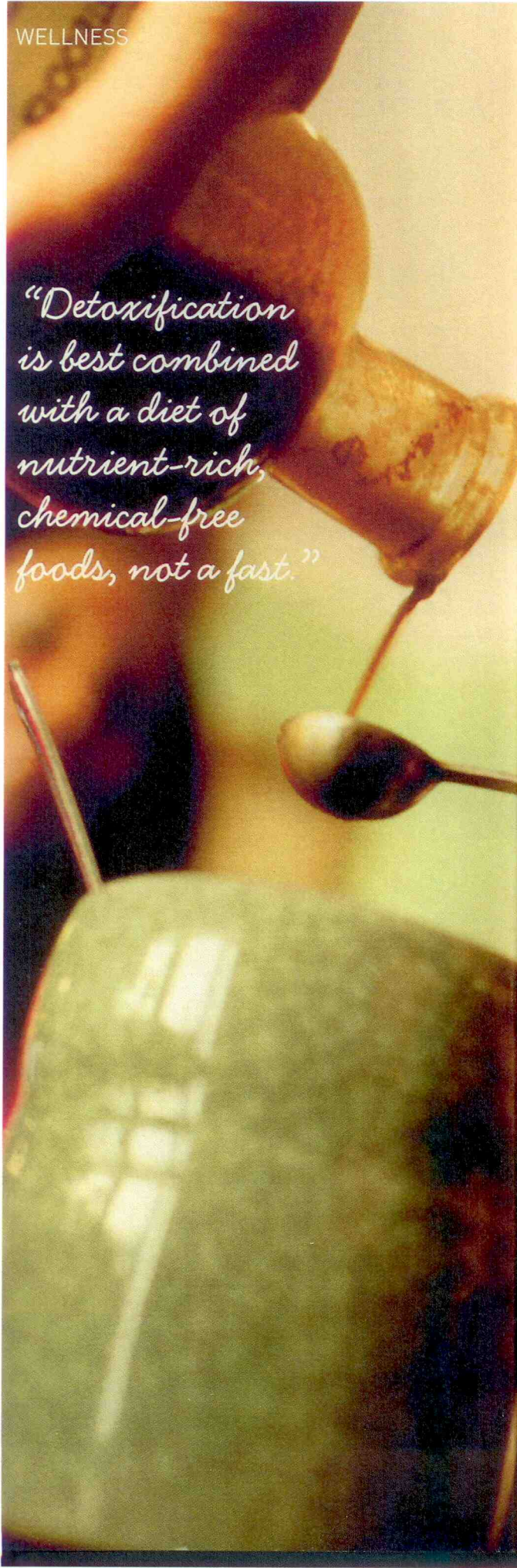
During the cleanse you may experience mild headaches, muscle aches, or changes in bowel habits. These symptoms occur as toxins are mobilized and circulate in the blood. Symptoms are usually mild and temporary, so stop the cleanse if side effects last more than 24 hours, if they intensify, or if you experience symptoms not specified here.

Most detoxification programs are not designed as weight-loss programs, but as the body starts to function at a better level, weight loss can sometimes be a natural side effect.

Most people have no problems maintaining sufficient energy levels to continue with regular daily activities while on a good cleansing program. Some people may have to curtail more strenuous physical activity during a cleansing program.

*"Good health depends on our ability to effectively eliminate toxins."*





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Major cleanses are beneficial to most people when they last three to seven days and are done two to four times a year. Doing a cleanse at the change of the seasons is an excellent way to rejuvenate the body and follow the cycles of change with the environment.

#### TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR FIRST

Since most cleanses on the market can be quite aggressive, they are best done under the supervision of a licensed health care practitioner. Ask your health care practitioner to help you select and then monitor your cleanse in order to minimize side effects and maximize results. If you experience any unusual symptoms or unpleasant effects, be sure to contact your health care practitioner. Cleanses should not be done if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. Cleanses should be done with caution if you suffer from a chronic condition such as diabetes, heart disease, or cancer.

By safely and effectively cleansing and detoxifying your body, you can reap the benefits of better health, brighter skin, more energy, and weight loss—true health is achieved by cleansing from the inside out. **a**

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