

*Protein-rich, sugar-free
'green drinks' help make
detoxing delicious!*

GET YOUR GLOW ON

New Year, New You, right? 2015 is the year you're finally going to get serious about your health and, as *Beverly Au* discovers, a guided detox programme is a good place to start

More people sign up for a detox in January than at any other time of the year, says Graeme Bradshaw, founding director and naturopath, of Integrated Medicine Institute (IMI), aka DB's detox central. "You're winding down from a week (or more) of celebrations and parties," he explains. "You're feeling overloaded by too much alcohol and rich food, and too many late nights – and you decide it's time to make some resolutions about your health and wellbeing."

Of course, purification rituals – fasting, meditation, and the like – date back to time immemorial. The idea that we're somehow poisoning ourselves and we need to atone for our sins seems to come naturally to us, which may explain why it's still integral to most of the world's religions.

Today's version of auto-intoxication argues that a combination of food additives, pesticide residues on food, smog, excess meat, prescription drugs, nicotine and last night's bottle of wine cause a build-up of toxins in the body. Alternative medicine practitioners and naturopaths, from Phuket to Sri Lanka, Denpasar to DB, tell us we'll benefit from flushing them out – regularly.

What will I gain?

From the onset, it's important to recognise that improved health isn't found in a box of herbal supplements, a bottle of homeopathy, or a colonic irrigation. The lifestyle implications of a poor diet, lack of exercise, smoking, lack of sleep, and alcohol or drug use cannot simply be flushed or purged away. But a detox can help cleanse your body, and allow you to jump-start a healthier lifestyle.

Advocates for detox typically describe the liver and kidney as acting like filters, where toxins are physically captured and retained. "These organs need to be cleaned out periodically, like you'd rinse out a sponge, or change the air filter in your car," explains



A good detox centres on wellness not weight loss

Graeme, a DB resident of four years. "Not all detox programmes are created equal," he continues. "The key to an effective detox is to up-regulate the liver function and this takes specific amino acids that help bind and release pollutants and other toxins."

Conveniently, there is no shortage of detox solutions to absolve you of your sins in 2015. In fact, DBers need look no further than the Healthy DB Pop Up Event at Movement Improvement in DB North Plaza on January 24. Detox-friendly products on offer include supplements, superfoods and vegetarian dishes.

It's essential, however, to opt for a guided programme, whether you are planning to detox at home, or book into a spa resort for a full-on, cleansing 'mini-break'. Some of these focus on flushing out the bowel. Additionally, a detox, by its very nature, involves you radically altering your diet, and typical side effects include insomnia, fatigue, nausea, headaches, weakness and low blood sugar levels.

"The side effects of detox are easily managed when the appropriate meal-replacement drinks are used, as these nutrients regulate blood sugars and dispose of the toxins efficiently," says Graeme.

Will I lose weight?

Weight loss is of course, for many of us, a positive by-product of a successful detox. But it is a by-product of a cleanse not the main aim, and the body will move back to its pre-detox weight over time, if diet and activity levels remain the same.

What's key, is that you can learn a lot about improving your diet long term. Most detoxes involve you fasting and taking meal replacements at least for a day or two, and excluding some of the foods you are used to, like red meat, dairy and refined carbohydrates. Learning how to make delicious, protein-rich, sugar-free 'green drinks and soups' can only be a positive; eating more quinoa and kale, and less processed foods is sound dietary advice for everyone.

"Many participants find that their taste changes for the good and their old cravings disappear after a detox," says Graeme. "Going forward, they may find that they do not need to eat as much, and feel more satisfied with healthy choices."

Though not strictly a detox programme, since the primary aim is to lose weight, the Cambridge Weight Plan removes all the usual suspects from your diet and encourages you to 'eat clean'. The 'plan' is based around meal replacements combined with protein/green veggie meals. The formula of the meal replacements provides enough protein to protect lean tissue, the right level of carbohydrate to promote a mild ketosis and eliminate a sense of hunger, and the right levels of vitamins, minerals, trace elements and essential fatty acids to maintain good health.

"Weight loss is most successful when you receive support," says Cambridge Weight Plan's DB-based Carla Keating. "Whether you need advice along the way to your goal weight, motivation to stay active, or information on nutrition, we've got you covered." ▶

Do I need to take supplements?

It's clear that a beneficial detox helps you reassess your diet, and become better informed about healthful eating. As Southside-based Monica Wong of the international wellness product provider Forever Living, says, "Good health starts with good nutrition."

"With today's farming methods depleting the natural mineral content of our lands, we can no longer rely on our foods to completely provide us with the essential vitamins and minerals that our bodies need," Monica adds. "More people are turning to nutritional supplements as a means of getting sufficient quantities of those vital nutrients that can make a difference to their quality of health."

Many of Forever Living's supplements feature Aloe Vera. "It's often referred to as nature's best gift due to the health benefits derived from the sap," explains Monica. "Packed full of vitamins and minerals, it is a natural way to ensure health from the inside out. Drinking aloe gel can greatly improve digestive issues and help to improve your body's overall defence system."

Supplements are integral to the detox programmes offered at Central-based Body Awakening, co-owned by Mui Wo residents Jessica and Zachary Williams. Jessica, who has a Masters Degree in Holistic Nutrition, has guided hundreds of participants through a detox, and she draws on this experience while designing and modifying Body Awakening's cleansing programme and supplement range.

"We believe in the body's innate ability to heal itself, when given the right tools, and the mind's natural desire to be happy, healthy and full of energy," Jessica says. "We go to great lengths to ensure that our products are of unmatched quality and are absorbed into the body efficiently and effectively. We recognise that



Supplements provide essential nutrients that may be lacking in our diet

Detox as you go

The reality is you're probably not going to totally change your 'work hard, play hard' lifestyle in 2015. So take a look at IMI's 'party survival kit', which helps your body eliminate toxins as you party on!

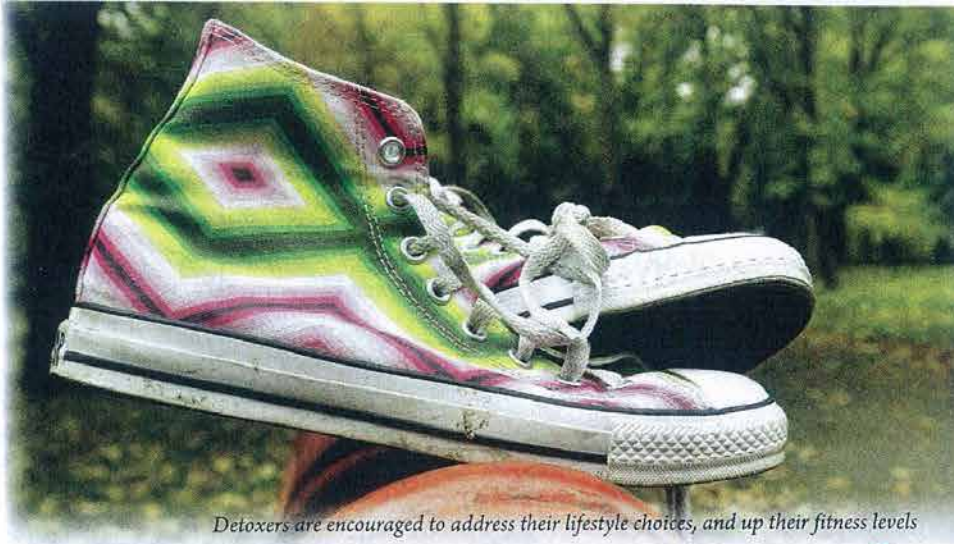
- 1 **Make wise alcohol choices:** When we drink alcohol, our blood sugar levels soar then sink. This can lead to inflammation, causing hangovers. Stick to low-sugar spirits, such as tequila or vodka, with a non-sugary mixer and lemon or lime. Dark liquors, like whiskey or bourbon, are more difficult for the body to digest and more likely to cause a hangover. With wine, red is your best choice because it's lower in sugar than white or sparkling. Nominate a couple of Alcohol Free Days each week, and stick to three or less drinks at any one time.
- 2 **Take nutrients:** Ola Loa is not only an easy-to-take vitamin C drink, but also a stronger detox version than the popular Berocca or Emergen-C. It provides active vitamin B, magnesium and zinc, along with vitamin C. Your liver needs all these nutrients to detoxify alcohol, reduce stress and boost your immune system.
- 3 **Support your liver:** Liver Support – a potent, clinical-grade formula – contains milk thistle and other effective herbs, to help your liver process alcohol. Take two or three capsules before you go out, or at bedtime, and say goodbye to hangovers.
- 4 **Stay calm and vital:** Serenity Response is the best-selling herbal supplement at IMI. Combining Ashwagandha extract and Siberian Ginseng, it promotes vitality during the day and supports normal sleep at night. It enhances the body's long-term response to prolonged stress, making you feel calmer but more energised.

IN FOCUS

there is no 'ideal health protocol' for every person, just as there is no 'ideal diet' for each and every one of us. For this reason, our diet, cleansing and detox programmes are available to clients only after a full nutritional consultation."

The IMI dispensary, in Central and DB, reputedly offers Hong Kong's most extensive range of natural and health products – over 900 items, mostly clinical-grade supplements.

"In most cases, we will prescribe natural health supplements, herbal tinctures, or homeopathic medicine, although we will recommend conventional medication and testing if necessary," explains Graeme. "The aim of a good detox is to activate the natural healing powers of the body." **B**



Detoxers are encouraged to address their lifestyle choices, and up their fitness levels

Find it

- Body Awakening, www.bodyawakening.net
- Cambridge Weight Plan, dbgirls@cambridgeweightplan.hk
- Forever Living, www.foreverlivinghk.weebly.com, monica.pswong@gmail.com
- Healthy DB Pop Up Event, Healthy Living in DB Facebook page
- Integrated Medicine Institute, www.imi.com.hk

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