

THE WISDOM OF AYURVEDA AND CLEANSING

WHAT IS CLEANSING:

Cleansing is an opportunity to relieve the body and mind from the burden of toxicity and unhealthy stress. It is remarkable how positively the body/mind responds when we give it the chance. By making simple dietary and lifestyle changes, reducing stress, eliminating toxins, and improving our nutritional intake, wonderful shifts take place. After a balanced cleanse, people often experience fewer aches and pains, improved digestion, better energy, clearer and calmer minds, better skin, loss of excess weight, a deeper connection with themselves, and a sense of empowerment which comes from taking their health into their own hands.

WHY CLEANSE:

We clean our homes, our automobiles, our skin. Less often does it occur to us to cleanse our internal organs and nervous system. Never before, in recorded history, have we been so consistently exposed to biological, dietary, chemical, heavy metal, electrical, emotional, psychological, and even spiritual stressors. In addition, the nutritional quality of our produce has significantly diminished in just the past 40 years. The synergistic effect of stress, toxicity, and nutritional depletion can be devastating to our wellbeing. The good news is that the principle of synergy works just as effectively in a positive direction. By managing stress more effectively, healing the nervous system, improving our nutritional status, eliminating stored toxins and reducing exposure to environmental and dietary toxins, we can regain our personal potential for health, vitality and mental clarity. This is what real cleansing is all about.

AYURVEDA AND CLEANSING:

Cleansing was originally taught in India's ancient system of medicine known as Ayurveda. Ayurveda is a Sanskrit word which means "knowledge of the totality of life". It is the sister of the yoga system. While there are many health benefits from practicing the various forms of yoga, the goal of yoga is to experientially realize who we are in truth. Ayurveda is said to be a gift from the devas (divine beings) to assist us in maintaining health, while living our lives to the fullest and growing to our greatest spiritual potential.

THE 2 MAJOR CAUSES OF DISEASE:

Ayurveda says the cause of disease begins with ama, or toxins, in the digestive tract. Our digestive system turns out to be similar to the roots of a tree. Imagine a tree with a damaged or toxic root system. Its branches, leaves and fruits will be compromised. This occurs in our body as well. All of digestion focuses on breaking our food down enough so that the little roots located in the small intestine can absorb nutrients. Once absorbed, all the various tissues of the body can be fed and developed. When the roots of the body become clogged and dysfunctional due to excess ama (toxicity), poor diet, stress, or inherited weakness, the early stages of disease begins.

The original cause of disease according to ayurvedic sages is expressed in the Sanskrit word, prajnaparadha. Prajaparadha means to offend our own wisdom, knowledge and experience. The idea is that we all inherently have wisdom, intuition, feelings and experiences that are meant to guide our decisions, including ones related to our wellbeing. For various reasons, such as childhood wounding and familial, social or cultural conditioning we may begin to ignore or mis-trust our knowing. When we continually do so, we make decisions and create habits that hinder our health. Cleansing, combined with exercise, meditation and yoga clears our inner vision and helps to eliminate prajaparadha.

CLEANSING TO THE RESCUE!

Cleansing gives the body (and its roots), mind and senses a rest from constant challenges and the chance to eliminate excess ama. This gives us the opportunity to heal and regenerate. So often we unknowingly cause our own distress. When we regularly challenge our body and mind with toxic substances and foods, our immune system becomes preoccupied and less able to handle its potentially more serious immune challenges. When we remove the burden on the digestive tract, nervous system, mind and senses, our system has the chance to heal and restore itself. When this healing occurs, we feel more like ourselves which supports us in making healthy choices and being connected to our inner wisdom.

AYURVEDIC CLEANSING APPROACH:

Ayurveda has a very balanced approach to cleansing. It generally does not recommend severe cleanses unless one is very strong or very ill. A gradual and incremental approach over a number of days, weeks or even months is most beneficial. It doesn't really work to say "hurry up and cleanse" in order to be immediately healthy and balanced. That is kind of like saying "hurry up and meditate." Avoiding severe detox reactions is essential. This often comes from an inability of our elimination channels to keep up with the fast release of toxins into our systems. This leads to toxins relocating from one area of the body or to another. In modern terms this is known as the detox/retox syndrome. In overly aggressive cleansing, benefits gained physically or mentally are usually quickly lost.

HOW TO CLEANSE?

According to Ayurveda and Chinese medicine, Spring/early Summer, and Fall are the best times to cleanse. When undergoing a cleanse it is recommended that you have the support of a health practitioner or group, especially if it is your first time. However, any thing we do to relieve the

burden on our body, mind, senses and soul will often bring immediate relief, substantial results, and is always a great preparation for a deeper cleanse.

Since spring and early summer is the time of year most related to the liver and small intestine it is a great time to focus on cleansing and rejuvenating these very important organs. During the fall, it is best to focus on the lungs and large intestine. You can begin your cleansing process by:

- Decreasing or eliminating high ama or toxic foods and substances such as refined sugar, refined carbohydrates, heavy meats such as beef or pork, and choosing organic options whenever
- Drink plenty of filtered or spring water.
- Eat lots (70% or more) of leafy green veggies with each meal
- Add a green phytonutrient drink a couple times a day in water or in a smoothie
- Add extra vitamin C, and sip dandelion and milk thistle tea to benefit the liver, gall bladder and blood.
- Meditate and try a media fast for your mind and senses, for a few days or even a week or two! This gives us a chance to process, digest, and eliminate much of the ama we have accumulated in our nervous systems.
- Get massage, do pranayama (deep breathing), dance, pray, chant, meditate, do yoga, and go for walks while consciously breathing. to nurture your body.
- Eat consciously, remember to breathe and chew!
- Keep it simple.

Fall and Spring are great times for cleansing. Nature itself supports us in this process during these seasons. A little cleansing goes a long way in lightening us up in body, mind and soul, while inspiring us to align with the energies of nature and our inner wisdom.

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