

Do detox diets work?

Detox or cleansing diets are a popular way to make a change and cut calories quickly. But, do they really work?

HOW DO DETOX DIETS WORK?

Detox diets use a variety of techniques in an attempt to “cleanse” the body. These include:

- Fasting
- Juicing
- Herbs
- Supplements
- Colon cleanses such as enemas or laxatives
- Saunas
- Food restrictions

The idea is that these techniques cleanse and purify the body of toxins by encouraging increased elimination and digestive rest. Some diets even claim to remove toxins and metals from the bloodstream.

IS THERE EVIDENCE DETOX DIETS WORK?

Currently, there is no evidence that these methods to “detoxify” have any impact on human health. Your body already has ongoing processes to purify the blood and remove waste products. For example, your liver and digestive tract are two of the organ systems responsible for protecting you from harmful toxins.

While some people report feeling better or losing weight on a detox diet, this effect may be the result of removing unhealthy foods from the diet and cutting back on calories. You could likely achieve the same results by eating a healthier, balanced diet in general.

ARE DETOX DIETS SAFE?

Some of these diets can be unsafe and use false advertising to promote their claims. Many products used in detoxes or cleanses are unregulated by the FDA and could potentially cause harmful side effects.

In addition, detox diets are often unbalanced, either by avoiding most foods or encouraging a high intake of specific foods or drinks. This could lead to problems with hydration or electrolyte balance, as well as cause digestive problems.

Other things to consider include any health conditions or medications you currently take. You should talk to your doctor before trying any type of detoxing or cleansing.

ARE THERE ALTERNATIVES TO DETOxing?

If you are interested in cleaning up your diet but want to avoid the quick fixes promised by detox diets, there are other great options. Improving your health is a lifelong journey. Small changes over time can make a big difference.

Consider these ideas:

- Cut out soda, juices, and other beverages, and let water be your drink of choice.
- Limit added sugars in your diet.
- Increase your intake of fruits and vegetables to at least 5 servings a day.
- Avoid late-night eating.
- Limit or remove alcohol from your diet.

