

Natural Health Perspectives: Toxins In Your Body May Prevent You From Losing Weight

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You have been doing everything right-getting more exercise, limiting your serving sizes, eating plenty of salads, not eating fast foods-and still you hold on to those extra pounds. When excess weight won't come off, it makes sense to start asking why.

Your body dilutes toxicity with fat

Do you know the saying, "The solution to pollution is dilution?" One reason the body holds on to excess weight is to dilute toxicity. The body will hold on to weight to store heavy metals or pesticides if there is not a mechanism for safely removing them. It may choose to hold onto extra water and fat to dilute the toxins it is storing.

Some sources claim that 25% of the population in the United States suffers from heavy metal poisoning to some extent. Heavy metals can come from foods in the form of pesticides, as well as from drugs, [alcohol](#), solvents, and food additives. They can also come from environmental contamination in the home or industry. The most common problematic heavy metals include lead, mercury, cadmium, arsenic, nickel, and aluminum. Some common symptoms of heavy metal and pesticide toxicity include headaches, fatigue, muscle pains, indigestion, constipation, dizziness, and poor coordination.

Toxic chemicals can collect in the brain, kidneys, and in fat cells, where they can disrupt normal function. These metals primarily affect the nervous system and give rise to symptoms such as headaches, [depression](#),

confusion, tingling in the hands and feet, abnormal nerve reflexes as well as increased weight. Laboratory tests for heavy metals include [blood tests](#), urine tests, and fat or hair analysis. However, a detailed medical history and liver function tests often give the most information about the liver's ability to detoxify the blood.

Food toxins trigger your body's defenses

Some foods are contaminated with heavy metals, pesticides, herbicides, or other chemicals. Foods that carry toxic compounds can cause the body to hold on to extra pounds by starting an immune reaction that causes inflammation, or retention of excess water, in the body. When a food is contaminated, the body reacts to the chemicals in the food by making antibodies, which cause the inflammation. Over time, in fact, the body sometimes even develops antibodies to the food itself, even if it is not contaminated.

Another cause of food toxicity occurs because of incomplete digestion. Food that is digested well is broken down in the stomach and intestines and absorbed into the bloodstream in small molecules. However, if the body lacks the [enzymes](#) it needs to break down foods properly, or if stomach acid is too low, larger food molecules are absorbed into the blood. This can cause an immune reaction. When food is incompletely digested, the liver has to work harder to process and eliminate the larger food particles. These act similarly to toxins in the body, causing inflammation. In addition, the liver isn't available to detoxify the blood efficiently because it is busy breaking down the larger food particles. An elimination/reintroduction diet can help identify the foods that the body is unable to digest properly. Digestive enzymes and supplements for intestinal repair are also helpful to improve digestion and decrease inflammation.

Clean up toxicity with a cleanse

The liver detoxifies many of the chemicals to which the body is exposed. However, if the body is holding on to extra weight due to toxins, a cleanse can help. Liver detoxification through diet and [supplements](#) can support chemical and pesticide elimination. Detoxification and cleansing can sometimes make symptoms worse as the body moves the toxins out of the body; so working with a doctor is helpful to make the process comfortable and efficient.

Different types of cleanses

Different types of cleanses are useful for different people. The time of year, your individual strength, and your activity level will determine the cleanse that is best for you. Some options to consider are:

1. Protein powder cleanse to aid detoxification

These cleanses utilize a protein powder with nutrients that aid the body in detoxification. The protein powder can be used as a single meal replacement or can be the only thing you eat for a short time.

2. Ten-day fast with food to clean out the system

This cleanse uses clean, cooked, easily digested foods that are generally not allergenic to clean out the system and give the body a rest from difficult-to-digest foods.

3. Juice fasting to give the digestive system a rest

Drinking diluted [vegetable juice](#) provides [calories](#), [vitamins](#), and [minerals](#) while giving the digestive system a rest. Regular enemas are recommended with a juice fast to clear the intestines of the fine silt in juice and because juice lacks significant fiber.

4. Water fasting (under medical supervision) to cleanse the system

[Drinking water](#) only for one to three days is usually done in the summer by people who have done cleanses regularly and are quite strong. Lots of rest and medical supervision is recommended.

5. Cleansing the body of heavy metal toxicity

If a person has heavy metals in the body, chelation can be used to help bind and eliminate them. Intravenous EDTA or oral DMSA are both used to remove heavy metals from the body. Assuring that all the routes of elimination are open and functioning well is crucial in the detoxification process.

As fewer toxins are added to the system, the body has time to eliminate the accumulated toxins stored in the fat, organs and between cells in the body. Fat and water weight can drop off quickly once efficient elimination is established. Cleansing can also help you jump start healthy eating habits.