



TOXINS & CHRONIC CONDITIONS

Ask Your Pharmacist

In this day and age we live in an environment that is toxic. The foods we eat and even the water we drink are full of chemicals. More than ever before, we use more drugs, eat more sugar and refined foods. Did you know that each year the average American consumes 150 lbs of sugar and 566 cans of soft drinks? This is equivalent to 52 teaspoonfuls of added sugars per person per day, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. According to the US Environmental Protection Agency over 5 billion pounds of chemical pollutants are released into the environment each year. People may also be exposed to toxins through the long-term use of certain prescription drugs. Even our own body produces toxins as part of its normal metabolic processes.

The incidence of many toxicity related diseases continues to take its toll on the nation's health. Cancer and cardiovascular disease are two of the main ones, not to mention a wide range of symptoms, such as headaches, fatigue, and gastrointestinal problems, impaired immune systems - all related to toxicity. There's considerable controversy on the subject of toxins and their effects on humans. Some governmental agencies tell us it is of no concern, while yet others tell us it is a major concern.

The toxins produced within the body are known as endotoxins. Toxins produced outside the body, or environmental toxins, are known as exotoxins. Our body has ways to eliminate these toxins through the liver, gastrointestinal tract, kidneys and lungs.

However, when the body experiences an overload of toxic substances, any number of medical conditions can develop. Fibromyalgia, Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease and autoimmune disorders such as rheumatoid arthritis, lupus and multiple sclerosis have been associated with toxins.

It is therefore all the more important to ensure that we help our bodies eliminate these toxins through a process called detoxification. There are many 'detox' programs that cleanse the body of toxins and help maintain health. Although basic detoxification begins with diet, 'detox' programs may include nutritional supplementation for the liver, lungs and kidneys. 'Detox' programs differ in how they function. Some work with the bowels, while others may cleanse the liver, or may aid the kidneys in their functions. Basically, with a combination of such 'detox' programs, one can effectively restore good health. As the body successfully eliminates toxins, energy and vigor are restored.

The gastrointestinal tract plays an important role in detoxification. The mucosa of the GI tract acts as a natural barrier and prevents toxins from entering the blood stream. The mucosa is similar to the soft tissue on the inside of the mouth. If the mucosa is compromised in any way, it allows toxins and allergens to enter the blood. This is called intestinal permeability, or "leaky gut" syndrome. This leaky gut syndrome may cause many or all of the symptoms mentioned above. Many over-the-counter and prescription drugs may cause the mucosa to be compromised. Anti-inflammatory medications can damage the

for your best health

Visit our pharmacy or website to learn more about toxins and how they effect your body.

TOXINS (continued)

mucosa, while antibiotics wipe out the beneficial bacteria which protect the mucosa. A poor diet may also contribute to a leaky gut. Dietary fiber from whole grains, beans, fruits and vegetables can also help protect the mucosa. Many people do not eat enough fiber containing foods.

Since the liver is responsible for many of the important 'detox' functions in the body, eliminating toxins through the liver is a major component of detoxification. The herb Milk Thistle is an old time remedy used for hundreds of years by herbalists for jaundice and liver obstructions.

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Milk thistle is a plant commonly found growing wild in a variety of settings in North America and Europe. Research studies have shown milk thistle was able to up-regulate the liver's detoxification pathways.

N-acetyl-cysteine is an amino acid frequently used in the medical field for liver toxicity. This supplement can help improve the liver's ability to eliminate toxins. N-acetyl-cysteine can also produce a very potent antioxidant enzyme system known as glutathione.

Vitamin E and Lipoic Acid are antioxidants that can eradicate the damaging free radicals that may be produced during the detoxification process.

Supplements for gastrointestinal function can include psyllium and probiotics. Probiotics, including lactobacillus, acidophilus and bifidobacterium, are considered to be the healthy, friendly bacteria that reside in the GI tract. Probiotics can re-colonize the GI mucosa with good flora and help prevent toxins from entering the bloodstream. Psyllium is another source of fiber that can help keep the GI mucosa healthy. Glutamine is an amino acid used to help heal the GI tract and help reduce leaky gut syndrome.

All of these nutrients can be helpful to up-regulate the liver detoxification process and keep the gastrointestinal tract healthy in order to prevent toxins from entering the blood. However, diet and lifestyle factors can be crucial. Smoking is a major toxin and may contribute to many disease processes. A lousy diet consisting of fast foods and excessive sugar can put an extra strain on the liver and GI tract. On the other hand, a diet high in fiber and cruciferous vegetables (such as broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage) can improve bowel function and up-regulate Phase II liver detoxification. Another important factor about vegetables is their antioxidant potential. As mentioned above, antioxidants can help reduce the side effects of the detoxification process.

We have many good quality programs and products for detoxing. Our pharmacist will be happy to work with you and make recommendations based on your lifestyle, the state of your health and current medications.