



CHAPTER ONE

The Principles of Optimal Health

Introduction

THE SIMPLYRAW LIVING FOODS DETOX PROGRAM IS

a gentle and effective program using fresh, uncooked plant foods to cleanse the body of accumulated wastes and toxins. The program isn't as restrictive as fasting and is easy to maintain during a regular working schedule. Unlike many other programs, you won't feel deprived or go hungry, and the abundance of vitamins, minerals, and enzymes will supply the body with the daily nutrients and energy that is necessary for optimum health. Instead of taking countless pills and supplements, the SimplyRaw detox invites you to participate in your own health by making healthy lifestyle changes.

The manual provides a shopping list, useful tips, health-enhancing practices to incorporate into your daily life, sample menus, reference materials, and delicious recipes to help transition to a living foods lifestyle. I recommend that you review the shopping list and purchase key ingredients at least one week before you start.

The SimplyRaw detox is a simple yet powerful program for improving your well-being on every level. You will have more energy and experience a lightness of body, mind, and spirit. Your immune system will be strengthened, digestion improved, and you will lose that extra weight and feel more positive in general. The lifestyle habits you learn during this program will stay with you for your lifetime.

Although you will achieve best results by following the program 100 percent, you may customize it to fit your own lifestyle and schedule. If you're not ready to go all the way, you may tailor it to meet your specific needs and still achieve positive results, making significant improvements to your health.

Our toxic world

“Chemicals ... from well-known toxins to newer compounds with unknown effect are building up in our bodies and sometimes staying there for years.”
—“The Pollution Within,” by David Ewing Duncan, *National Geographic*, October 2006

We are living in a toxic and chemically polluted environment, and our health is threatened by the many chemicals and other pollutants in our air, food, and water.

Average people of all ages and races throughout the world are being inundated with thousands of chemicals that are invisible, odorless, and colorless, yet have a deadly effect on our bodies. Toxins include poisons, heavy metals, synthetic hormones and hormone-mimicking chemicals, pesticides, herbicides, cleaning solvents, and smog. These and many other substances are being absorbed into our bodies through contact with clothing, furniture, carpets, air, cosmetics, and the environment within which we live. Fortunately, our bodies are equipped with organs of elimination to clear away the accumulation of these toxins; however, when our organs are overworked, a buildup of toxicity occurs. Our health then suffers. We become fatigued, lack concentration, and become susceptible to sickness.

Many studies link environmental chemicals to the state of our health. Toxins disrupt normal metabolic functioning of the body, which, over time, can lead to conditions such as chronic fatigue, fibromyalgia, asthma, infertility, neurological disorders, and inflammatory disease. Cancer and cardiovascular disease, arthritis, allergies, obesity, and many skin problems are among the main toxicity-related diseases.

Toxins can damage our health, the health of our children, and the health of our planet.

How serious a problem is this? How widespread? How toxic are we? The report *Polluted Children, Toxic Nation* (toxicnation.ca) contains the results of “the first Canadian study to test for harmful chemicals in children’s bodies, and the results show that Canadians, young and old, are polluted regardless of where they live, work, play, or go to school.”

Toxins can be found in:

- processed foods (additives, dyes, preservatives)
- animal products (hormones, steroids, antibiotics in meat and dairy products, and mercury in fish)
- mold-contaminated foods (peanuts and cashews may be contaminated with aflatoxin)
- rancid vegetable oils
- tap water
- coffee and tea
- tobacco
- antibiotics and other pharmaceuticals
- pesticides, herbicides
- city air
- heavy metals in soil
- plastic products
- petroleum-based chemical cleaning products
- carpets
- plywood and particle board products containing formaldehyde
- dyes
- commercial shampoos, cosmetics, body care products, nail polish, hair dyes
- perfumes, colognes, and other scented products
- deodorants containing aluminum chlorohydrate, methylparaben, propylene glycol
- bedding (foam and cotton mattresses and pillows contain fire retardants and pesticides)
- candles with lead-core wicks
- soft vinyl floors
- photocopiers and correction fluid (trichloroethylene/TCE)

See page 60 for more information on making your home toxin-free.

How toxic are you?

The following may be symptoms of toxicity:

- exhaustion, fatigue
- muscle and joint pain
- compromised digestion
- intestinal bloating or gas
- chronic constipation, diarrhea
- recurring headaches
- arthritis
- cardiovascular disease
- excess weight
- sinus problems
- asthma
- psoriasis, adult acne, rashes
- abnormal body odor and breath
- coated tongue
- metallic taste in mouth
- food allergies

- brittle nails and hair
- depression
- mood swings and anxiety
- chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia
- poor memory or concentration
- frequent colds and flu
- insomnia or over-sleeping
- powerful food cravings
- environmental sensitivities, especially to odors

Tip: A strong body and immune system can resist toxic overload and disease.

Why detox?

In our toxic environment, detoxification is crucial, a matter of survival. We are assaulted with pollutants daily, from environmental pollutants to the toxins produced by our own bodies as byproducts of normal metabolism, and most of these toxins are stored in our bodies as acid, mucus, or fat. Toxins slow down the body's metabolism and lower immunity, leaving you feeling sluggish, heavy, tired—and ultimately causing illness and disease. Toxins can lodge in the organs, cells, and fat tissues, making it difficult to lose weight.

Our bodies are naturally equipped to eliminate harmful substances through the liver, kidneys, lungs, colon, skin, and lymphatic system. However, as toxins accumulate throughout the body, it can no longer keep up with elimination, leading to symptoms such as fatigue, headaches, aches and pains, coughs, congestion, and gastrointestinal problems. Long-term exposure can weaken our systems, increase our susceptibility to infection, and eventually lead to chronic illness.

To thrive in this increasingly polluted environment and to reverse illnesses, our bodies need extra support through detoxification. Many diseases are a form of toxicity in the body, and in order to reverse illness, we must first remove the toxicity. This can be achieved by eating a living foods diet.

Detoxifying is a vital part of any program designed to restore your body to optimum health and vitality, and can be one of the finest tools we have for our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. The elimination of processed and acid-forming foods leads to reduced stress on the digestive system, allowing the body to focus its resources on healing.

As you rid your body of old toxic matter and provide it with an abundance of nutrients, the body goes into balance and does what it was designed to do—heal and stay healthy.

When the body is cleansed, it becomes more efficient at digestion, assimilation, and elimination. Detoxifying strengthens the immune system and gives your body greater energy. It also reduces inflammation and results in a slimmer body. Skin becomes softer and more youthful in appearance; your eyes sparkle and become

brighter, you will shed excess weight, and you will feel much more vibrant, happy, and alive!

Detoxification also gives your body a much needed rest from poor dietary and lifestyle habits that have wreaked havoc on your health. When we eat an unnatural diet high in fats, meats, dairy, processed foods, and chemicals, detoxification becomes necessary, particularly to those who eat excessively. We need to cleanse more frequently and work harder to rebalance our bodies, depending on how far away from nature our diets and lifestyles have become.

The benefits of detoxing include:

- reduced toxic buildup
- increased energy and vitality
- stronger immune function
- improved digestion, absorption, and elimination
- slimmer figure
- blood purification
- reduced allergy symptoms
- clearer sinuses
- healthier, softer skin
- improved sleep patterns
- reduced cravings
- heightened mental clarity, focus, concentration, and memory
- better mental and emotional well-being
- a feeling of rejuvenation on all levels
- freedom from addictions to sugar, salt, refined carbohydrates, alcohol, junk foods, caffeine, nicotine

Why organic?

“Until we have a more complete understanding of pesticide toxicity, the benefit of the doubt should be awarded to protecting the environment, the worker, and the consumer—this precautionary approach is necessary because the data on risk to human health from exposure to pesticides are incomplete.”

—*The British Medical Association Guide to Pesticides, Chemicals and Health. Report of the Board of Science and Education, 1992*

Organic produce has repeatedly been shown to be of higher nutritional value than conventionally grown produce. Toxic elements such as synthetic pesticides, fertilizers, herbicides, fungicides, antibiotics, sewage sludge, growth hormones (to produce meat, poultry, eggs, and dairy products) and confined-livestock operations are not permitted in organic production or certification. This means that there is a lower risk of pesticides affecting the soil, ground water, rivers, lakes, and atmosphere.

According to the Organic Council of Ontario, going organic has benefits for health, the environment, and livestock. Purchasing local organic foods

brings an added benefit of sustainability as well as reducing transportation needs. Organic practices also aim to preserve biodiversity through the use of traditional seed varieties, crop rotation, and respect for the natural diversity of the local environment.

Organic foods are one of the most important choices we can make, and when we choose to purchase them, we are not only choosing higher-quality products, we are sending a powerful message by voting with our dollars. Organically grown foods:

- eliminate intake of chemicals and heavy metals linked to cancer and other diseases
- offer higher nutritional value than regular, conventionally grown foods
- protect future generations from widely used cancer-causing pesticides in food
- are not genetically modified (GM). It is currently not mandatory to label GM foods, and it is estimated that at least 60 percent of conventional food in grocery stores contain ingredients from genetically engineered crops.
- save energy
- minimize topsoil erosion
- protect water quality
- support smaller family farms dedicated to sustainability
- provide better working conditions for farmers and workers
- offer pure and natural taste (many top chefs use only organic produce)

If you must use commercial produce, always soak in a vegetable wash and/or peel well—but note that many nutrients are close to the peel.

Why eat raw and living foods?

Raw and living foods are high in enzymes that assist your body to digest food and absorb nutrients into the bloodstream. Enzymes play an important role in energy production and the repair of tissues, cells, and organs. They are the catalyst for life and are needed for every chemical reaction that takes place in the human body. Raw foods contain the enzymes required to convert molecules into the basic building blocks of metabolism: protein is converted into amino acids, complex carbohydrates and starches into simple sugars, fats into fatty acids.

In our modern world, our bodies are under stress from pollutants. To help combat the stress load and prevent disease, we need to nourish our bodies with easy-to-digest food. Raw and living foods are packed with the vitamins, minerals, enzymes, chlorophyll, oxygen, and antioxidants needed to fuel our cells.

When eating a diet high in raw fruits and vegetables, your body is able to focus its resources on cleansing and rebuilding the immune system. These nutrient-rich foods increase energy, assist healing, rebuild healthy tissue, and invigorate the entire body. You feel vital because all cell functions are operating at peak performance.

Dr Edward Howell writes, in *Enzyme Nutrition* (Avery 1995): “Enzymes are the catalyst for the hundreds of thousands of chemical reactions that occur throughout the body; they are essential for the digestion and absorption of foods as well as for the production of cellular energy. Enzymes are essential for most of the building and rebuilding that goes on constantly in our bodies.”

Harmful effects of cooking

Cooking literally destroys the life of food. During the heating process, valuable nutritional substances are altered. Once cooked above 115 to 118 degrees F, enzymes are destroyed. Proteins are greatly altered, fats oxidized, vitamins diminished. Minerals undergo molecular changes at higher temperatures, making them more difficult for the body to digest and metabolize. Because cooked food passes through the digestive tract much more slowly than raw food, fermentation and putrefaction can occur, causing a buildup of gas and heartburn. Cooked food causes the body to work much harder for less nutrients.

Because there are few enzymes present in cooked foods, the body is forced to use its own limited reserves. Eventually, the body’s own enzymes are depleted. Low enzyme activity has been found to contribute to chronic conditions such as diabetes, allergies, skin disorders, and cancer. It also results in weight gain, digestive disorders, lethargy, inflammation, and loss of both skin elasticity and muscle tone. Enzyme depletion and aging go hand-in-hand. Eating enzyme-less foods can also place a burden on your pancreas and other organs, which eventually exhausts these organs.

Studies conducted by the Hippocrates Health Institute drew direct links between a raw vegan diet, immune system recovery, and the healing of catastrophic illnesses and diseases.

Eat less, live longer

Aside from eating high-quality foods, eating less food is one of the best things we can do for our bodies to achieve optimal health. Instead of having a huge dinner, for example, you can break it up into smaller, more frequent meals and take the load off your body.

Studies have found that the majority of centenarians around the world typically are much less than the average population. They avoided overtaxing their bodies and refrained from all kinds of overindulgences. All centenarians surveyed were moderate eaters throughout their lives.

Even the healthiest food, if eaten in excess, can make us unwell. The amount of food each individual needs depends on various factors such as gender, activity level, genetics, metabolism, growth rate, age, and climate. Try to tune in to your body and recognize your own true hunger needs. Genuine hunger is recognizable!

For optimal digestion, do not eat more than you can hold in two hands. Watch your portions, and eat only until you feel satisfied. If you aren't hungry, then don't eat. It's that simple. Be aware of realistic portion sizes and recognize that you may need to eat a bit more at first when transitioning away from a cooked diet as your body adjusts. Follow the three-quarters rule: stop eating when you are three-quarters full. The less food you eat all at once, the less hungry you feel because the food is more efficiently digested and utilized. Try to eat smaller meals and eat light to stay healthy!

Overeating

Overeating puts an enormous amount of stress on all the organs—especially the digestive system. In order to process a meal, the body must produce hydrochloric acid, pancreatic enzymes, bile, and other digestive substances. When we overeat, the digestive system cannot meet the demands placed upon it. This causes food to break down poorly, which leads to poor assimilation and absorption. Undigested excess waste also creates gases in the digestive tract that are absorbed into the blood, leading to a toxic body.

Studies show that overeating is one of the main causes of many degenerative diseases. In fact, overeating can poison the whole body. It diverts our energy towards processing food, instead of repairing, regenerating, and healing. Overburdening the body with food (even if it's "healthy" food) is not only a cause for obesity but other illnesses such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and cancer. It also accelerates the aging process.

Most of us eat much more than we need. We are living in a very indulgent society where portions are huge, and we are conditioned from an early age to eat three meals plus snacks each day whether or not we are truly hungry. Our body wastes energy by trying to metabolize excessive amounts of food, leaving little energy to maintain health.

Most of us can easily reduce our food intake and be much healthier as a result. The best foods for us to eat are those that supply the maximum nutrition but require the least amount of work for our bodies to digest and assimilate. These are the high-water-content, chlorophyll-rich living foods.

If you must eat a large meal, make it lunch rather than dinner, as our bodies usually stop digesting soon after 8 p.m.

One of the first things people notice when eating a diet of nutrient-dense foods is that they don't have to eat as much to feel satisfied, and the cravings often go away. The cleaner your body, the more efficiently it will be able to function and thrive on less food, provided that it is high quality, nutrient-dense food.

Mindful eating

Always eat with awareness. Ask yourself how hungry you are before, during, and after each meal. Sit at the table, take the time to look at your food, give thanks, and chew each mouthful thoroughly. Being mindful and listening to your body leads to a healthy relationship with food. It takes approximately twenty minutes for your brain to receive the signal of satiation during a meal, so eat slowly, and recognize the nourishment you're giving your body with every bite. If you eat just enough to satisfy your hunger, you'll remain alert, relaxed, and feel your best.

Eating when stressed

Eating while stressed or rushed is one of the worst things we can do, as our digestion becomes compromised. Anything eaten during an aggravated state will either just sit in your stomach undigested or pass through the digestive tract undigested, causing diarrhea. Additionally, eating while stressed can trigger emotional eating, as we are not truly conscious of what we are doing during stressful times. This, too, can lead to further overeating.

Before and during eating, make sure you're relaxed. Avoid confrontations, serious discussions, or worries during meal times. Also avoid eating while driving, working, or watching television—especially the news. If you're stressed around meal times, allow yourself to slow down and relax before eating. Give yourself at least five minutes to unwind and take your mind off your worries. A few deep breaths in silence can greatly help reduce anxiety and tension. Light a candle, relax, and enjoy the act of eating away from the pressures of the world.

The importance of chewing

Digestion is the foundation of our health. The process of breaking down food into nutrients and absorbing these nutrients into the cells is critical to our health. If our food isn't completely digested, everything we do to try to attain optimal health will be less effective. Poor digestion is often at the root of health problems such as flatulence (intestinal gas), heartburn, burping, abdominal bloating, diarrhea, constipation, and nutritional deficiencies.

Digestion begins with chewing and mixing food with saliva in the mouth. We need to chew our food thoroughly, breaking it down into smaller particles and mixing it with our saliva. Human saliva contains enzymes. These enzymes (amylase) are produced by the salivary glands and break down starches into smaller molecules. The smaller the particles of food swallowed, the better broken down they will be in the stomach and the better nutrient absorption will be in the small intestine.

To get the most out of your food, you must be able to break down and effectively absorb the nutrients from the food. This means chewing food until it is completely liquefied. Why invest extra time and more money into preparing high-quality organic foods if you eat them hastily and forget to chew?

Maintaining a healthy weight

Often, people following a raw lifestyle do not lose weight, and some even gain pounds. This is usually due to overeating the wrong type of raw foods, such as nuts, seeds, and dehydrated foods, which are dense in calories and lacking in water. A nut-and-seed-based diet is between 70 to 90 percent fat. All fat is difficult to digest—more so than protein and carbohydrates. Cooked fats are even more difficult. Additionally, when excess calories are consumed beyond the body's needs, the body has to work harder. This contributes to excess free radicals (cellular damage) and aging.

Soaking nuts and seeds releases the enzyme inhibitors, and they become easier to digest, and less calorie-dense.

If you want to lose weight and be healthier in general, focus on high-water-content, quick-transit foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables with a moderate amount of fat. These foods provide the body with maximum nutrition and healing while demanding the least amount of time for digestion.

It is healthier to eat lightly steamed vegetables than to overeat nuts.

Weight-loss inhibitors:

- excess food intake
- excess fat intake
- lack of enzymes
- lack of high-water-content foods
- excess dehydrated foods
- lack of exercise
- late-night eating
- poor digestive, adrenal, or metabolic functions
- thyroid problems
- water retention
- sluggish liver
- mineral and vitamin deficiencies
- clogged colon, bowel difficulties
- yeast overgrowth
- food allergies
- parasites causing excessive appetite
- insulin imbalances