



WEEK EIGHT

Detoxification & Addiction

Our bodies are uniquely and miraculously built to encourage elimination of wastes and the accumulation of toxins, defined as “biologically produced poisons”. In our modern world, we are constantly exposed to a variety of toxins, both biologically produced and human-created, that create extra stress on our natural systems of elimination. Being conscious of a regular practice of detoxification is vital to maintaining a healthy stasis, particularly when we are managing the addictive behaviours that can lead to an accumulation of certain drugs, including cigarettes and alcohol. Our ancient ancestors didn’t have to battle against chemical assault from all-sides, the air, water, our homes, clothes and the even the food that we ingest. It’s nearly impossible to escape potential hazardous toxins from entering the body, beyond that which we consciously ingest.

This week we will explore a few key practices that can assist in eliminating toxins from the body, and next week we will dive even further into nutrition and diet for recovery, which is a natural extension of the detoxification and fortification process.

Keeping in mind that our bodies are excellent regulators and are built to help us eliminate anything that isn’t useful for our optimal functioning, it is possible for our bodies to accumulate toxins from drugs and chemicals to a point where our natural biological processes may need additional assistance with elimination. In Ayurvedic Medicine, the process of detoxification is called Panchakarma (the five actions/processes). These five actions are both cleansing to the

body, mind and spirit and involve physical processes that are meant to amplify the bodies normal processes of elimination. Most of you will be familiar with panchakarma, so we will explore these actions briefly, within the context of addiction recovery. To note, the traditional ayurvedic approach to panchakarma includes three phases: preparation, cleansing and rejuvenation. In this program, we will focus on the cleansing aspect of this process. Experienced Ayurvedic doctors and therapists may be able to address these therapies, but I cannot responsibly go into them in depth.

1. **Preparation :: Swedana** > The process of oleation: ingesting and applying essential oils to mobilize the toxins and involves the application of hot steam and warm oil therapies that are meant to encourage the flow of the toxins to the GI tract for elimination.

2. **Cleansing :: Vaman, Basti, Nasya, Virechan** > It is particularly important to note that there are many variables that will affect how, when, why and by whom these therapies are applied. If you are an Ayurvedic doctor/therapist with personal experience in both utilizing these techniques for yourself and prescribing them to clients, then it is possible to move ahead with prescribing them to others or using them for yourself. These are not to be trifled with and could be considered dangerous if used out of context and/or without experience.

Vaman :: Therapeutic Vomiting > Controlled vomiting is prescribed to eliminate excess Kapha.

Basti :: Enema Therapy > Vata is responsible for the retention of excess feces, urine and bile, and can be eliminated through controlled enema therapy. We understand that much of the imbalance created in addictive behaviours is due to vata, therefore we can note that basti can be an effective therapy particularly for addiction recovery.

Nasya :: Nasal Therapy > Elimination of toxins through the nose, to remove excess Kapha. Nasal administration of medication helps to correct the disorders of prana affecting the higher cerebral, sensory and motor functions.

Virechan :: Purgative/Laxative Therapy > Virechan is the cleansing of Pitta and the purification of blood toxins. There are herbs and substances that can be used as laxatives including senna, flaxseeds, psyllium seed, dandelion root, bran, raisins and prune.

1. **Rasayana :: Rejuvenation** > This final step of panchakarma involves further application of oils in uniquely restorative massage and bodywork techniques, as well as the use of ayurvedic herbs including ashwaghandha and An example is *Shirodhana*, where warm oil is continuously poured over the third-eye point, acting as a powerful and effective pacifier for the entire nervous system.

Hydrotherapy for Recovery

The ancient practice of using water as a precious resource for our recovery process is also very effective and accessible. Hydrotherapy addresses the circulatory system, which can be compromised by addictive behaviours and drug/substance use. The use of hydrotherapy stimulates the glandular system and strengthens the nervous system, as well as detoxifying and toning the organs. Hydrotherapy, traditionally known as the ancient practice of *Ishnaan*, is best practiced early in the morning, but is still effective at any time of day.

You can engage in the practice by use of cold showers OR by jumping into near-by bodies of water (ocean, lakes, streams). I'm a huge fan of year-round ocean dips, but vata-types might not be into this! As you dedicate yourself to hydrotherapy, you will notice an increased fortitude in being able to manage the "discomfort" of throwing yourself into cold water.

Traditional Hydrotherapy Steps:

1. Massage yourself with a dosha-appropriate oil (pitta: coconut, vata: sesame/coconut, kapha: sesame/sunflower)
2. Turn on the cold water in the shower. Step in and allow the cold water to strike your feet and calves first.
3. Step completely into the cold shower stream, allowing the water to invigorate your body from head to toe!

Accordinging to tradition, certain sensations of the body can be stimulated by contact with the cold water on particular parts of the body:

- Below the lower lip for 10 - 15 min: brighten and clear the mind
- Between eyebrows and upper lip: energizing
- Forehead: relaxing and sleep-inducing
- Upper Arm: stimulates the stomach
- Elbow to 2 inches above the wrist: corresponds to digestive tract

The process of "detoxification" occurs on every level: body, mind and spirit and will also be achieved through the process of practicing asanas and pranayama.

The Ayurvedic Kitchari Cleanse

A traditional Ayurvedic kitchari cleanse is a gentle yet effective way to rebalance, restore and detoxify the body. It is particularly safe for those recovering from addiction because it doesn't require the austere and extreme goals of fasting (juice or water), and still includes eating a meal of complete protein, while very effectively detoxifying the whole body, mind, spirit. As a practitioner, I feel comfortable in prescribing this type of "cleanse" to clients, because it allows for flexibility within the structure of the cleanse, and having done this cleanse myself on various

occasions, I know it to be safe, effective and manageable. The information below is adapted from John Douillard's "Short Home Cleanse" and Banyen Botanicals.

There are 20 amino acids that combine with one another to make the proteins the body needs. Ten of them, the body can synthesize on its own. The other ten, called **essential amino acids**, the body does not make, meaning we must get it from our foods. Animal proteins are "complete" in that they contain all ten essential amino acids, but plant foods need to be combined to make a complete protein.

Rice, like most grains, is very low in the amino acid **lysine**. As a result, if you live on grains alone, you will likely become protein deficient. Legumes and lentils, on the other hand, have lots of lysine, but they are generally low in **methionine, tryptophan** and **cystine**. Fortunately, grains are high in these three amino acids.

The marriage of rice and beans, as found in kitchari, has been providing the ten essential amino acids and making complete proteins for cultures around the world for thousands of years. For cultures that have subsisted on a plant-based diet, this marriage is often what allows their diet to be nutritionally sustainable.

With 95 percent of the body's serotonin produced in the gut, it is clear we process our stress through the intestinal wall. Chronic stress will irritate the intestinal wall and compromise digestion, the ability to detoxify through the gut, and cope with stress. During a kitchari cleanse, the digestive system can heal. While we offer four dietary options in our kitchari cleanses, eating just kitchari as a "mono diet" allows much of the digestion to be at rest during the cleanse, providing the nutrition needed to heal the gut and nourish the body.

Diet Guidelines

- In general, eat as much as is desired at each meal—enough to feel satisfied, but be careful not to overeat
- Eat kitchari for breakfast, lunch and dinner, allowing at least three hours between meals.
- You can garnish your kitchari with a little melted ghee to ensure that your system stays well-lubricated and that you continue to enjoy all six tastes in your diet.
- It is best to avoid snacking between meals, but if you need a little something extra, you can enjoy some fresh fruit or a few raw nuts.
- If the monodiet is causing a sense of deprivation, you can try steaming your vegetables and serving them as a separate side dish, garnished with a little melted ghee, a squeeze of lemon juice, and a pinch of salt. Or, have a side of ½ avocado with lemon juice and a sprinkle of salt.
- Try not to eat anything after 7 p.m.

- Drink at least 8–12 cups of room temperature, warm, or hot fluids each day to ensure adequate hydration and to help flush toxins from the system.
- Ideally, most of your fluids should be taken between meals.

Kitchari Recipe

This recipe makes enough kitchari for 3 or 4 meals. You can play with the mixture of spices. Many people prefer this recipe when the spices are doubled, or even tripled. Ghee is optional in this recipe. Optionally, you can start by browning the spices in a pan with 1-2 tbsp of ghee.

Ingredients:

- 1 cup split yellow mung dahl beans*
- ¼ – ½ cup long grain white or white basmati rice
- 1 tbsp fresh ginger root
- 1 tsp each: black mustard seeds, cumin, and turmeric powder
- ½ tsp each: coriander powder, fennel and fenugreek seeds
- 3 cloves
- 3 bay leaves
- 7-10 cup water
- ½ tsp salt (rock salt is best)
- 1 small handful chopped fresh cilantro leaves
- Can add steamed vegetables or lean meat when not cleansing, or for extra blood sugar support during a cleanse

*Split yellow mung dahl beans are available at Asian or Indian grocery stores, or online. Different spellings include mung or just dahl. Please note that you do not want the whole mung beans – which are green – or yellow split peas.

Method:

1. Wash split yellow mung beans and rice together until water runs clear.
2. In a pre-heated large pot, dry roast the ginger and all the spices (except the bay leaves) on medium heat for a few minutes. This dry-roasting will enhance the flavor.
3. Add dahl and rice and stir, coating the rice and beans with the spices.
4. Add water and bay leaves and bring to a boil.
5. Boil for 10 minutes.

6. Turn heat to low, cover pot and continue to cook until dahl and rice become soft (about 30-40 minutes).
7. The cilantro leaves can be added just before serving.
8. Add salt or Bragg's to taste.

For weak digestion, gas or bloating: Before starting to prepare the kitchari, first par-boil the split mung dahl (cover with water and bring to boil), drain, and rinse. Repeat 2-3 times. OR, soak beans overnight and then drain. Cook as directed.

Below is a list of online resources for panchakarma and detoxification:

- John Douillard: <https://lifepa.com/panchakarma/panchakarma-home/>
- Banyen Botanicals:
<https://www.banyanbotanicals.com/info/blog-the-banyan-insight/details/the-truth-about-panchakarma>
- Yoga Veda Panchakarma Retreat: <http://www.yogavedainstitute.com/retreats>