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- Insulin resistance or hypoglycemia
- Need for healthy weight loss to reduce adipose tissue
- Energy deficits
- Chronic aches and pains
- Persistent or recurrent irritability
- Changeable emotional disposition
- Multiple allergies or chemical sensitivities
- Paradoxical reactions to appropriate medication or supplements
- Women's health disorders such as polycystic ovary syndrome
- Fertility issues or the desire to prepare for healthy pregnancy
- Learning disorders, hyperactivity, or autism
- Chronic illness

PREPARATION FOR DETOX

Rarely is enough forethought and talk time dedicated to the prep for a detoxification program. Yet adequate attention to detail in the setup phase is critical to the success of the entire metabolic cleansing process. In order to provide a patient with the most effective detoxification, an evaluation of their elimination capacity is critical. Care should be taken in noting relevant details collected through history, examination, and laboratory analysis and in organizing the information in a way that informs the therapeutic direction.

The first phase of this entire process involves assessing whether a particular patient is appropriate for a metabolic detoxification program and then preparing him or her for the cleansing process. Initially the goal is to bring patients through a series of lifestyle modifications that move them toward a cleaner lifestyle, making healthier choices. Once those changes begin to take root, patients will reach a stage at which they are able to sustain a three-day cleansing process using entirely liquid foods, nutraceuticals, and protein supplements.

As practitioners consider the various therapeutic interventions and dosing scales, guidance will come from understanding the patient's total toxic burden and the strength of his or her constitution. The focus of specific supplements, botanical medicines, dietary modification, and lifestyle depends on the patient's stage of the detoxification journey. Note that similar products are often used throughout all the stages, with the dosing schedule increasing in a more restrictive and therapeutic lifestyle program as patients prep for detox and systemic cleansing.

In the next phase of detox, patients engage in a process requiring additional nutraceutical support and specific dietary guidelines, often culminating in a liquid nutrition/medical food fast. The entire detoxification journey is usually based on the timing of those fasting days, making sure that the patient's life schedule around that time creates the proper space for rest and regeneration. A weekend fast with liquid nutrition is not the easiest time to go to a wedding or a major social event. Planning ahead is part of preparing for a successful detox.

Once the deeper detox and cleansing phase is complete, patients "break fast" and begin reducing the therapeutic dosages of their supplements and medical/functional foods. They are encouraged to pay close attention to their symptoms as they reintroduce foods or behaviors that were restricted or avoided in the elimination protocol. The post-fasting detox window is very informative. As patients begin to transition back into a more diverse diet, they are encouraged to observe how their body responds to food, stress, people, sleep, sleeplessness, activity, lack of activity, and more. It is not uncommon for patients to notice that particular foods create immunological or gastrointestinal reactions as they systematically add common foods back into their diet. Usually it is best to dedicate as much as two months for the complete process. This allows the patient the personal flexibility to accomplish a comprehensive detox program on a successful timeline.

Personalized Toxicity Assessment

In-depth assessment and pattern recognition are the first steps in preparing for the detoxification process. The practitioner must first determine whether the patient is a candidate for detox based on his or her clinical presentation. This is achieved through advanced history-taking skills and the use of key questionnaires to gain robust, well-rounded insight into what is unique about the patient's lifestyle and manifestation of toxicity. The history includes detail on any symptoms of toxicity, as well as potential risk factors or triggers in the patient's lifestyle and environment.

Questionnaires

Review of symptoms. One of the most commonly used questionnaires in clinical practice is the MSQ (Medical Symptom Questionnaire). The MSQ is widely recognized as a useful, patient-friendly tool for the review of body systems, associated symptoms, and their intensity. This assessment also provides an opportunity to step back and observe how the patient is expressing the total toxic load. Any area of the questionnaire that scores greater than 10 directs the physician's attention to a particular system of the body for a more detailed intake or additional assessment. Scores greater than 50 overall indicate the need for a more thorough personalized assessment to determine if there is an excessive toxic load. The higher the score overall, the slower the detox program should be.

Assessing environmental exposures. When reviewing a patient's medical history, symptoms, and symptom progression, half the equation involves gathering the right