

In Pursuit of Plenty: A Nutritional Program for Drug Detoxification

prevalent addictive disease in this country today. More than 1 in 4 people (nearly 27%) between the ages of 18 and 64 years meet the diagnostic criteria for alcohol dependency, and according to estimates, 1 of every 5 patients admitted to a hospital is an alcohol abuser. Just think, 15 million Americans are reported to have alcohol problems, though fewer than 5 out of every 100 receive treatment.

The truth is, we have become a drug-dependant culture, and literally thousands of substances are used every day throughout the country, without a thought given to their long term effect. Western medicine, very much a drug-oriented system, reinforces this trend. Advertisers spend lots of money every day to convince us that we can get a 'quick fix' for whatever ails us. Commercials on T.V. run incessantly. Have a problem? Pop a pill for instant relief. We consume mountains of pills—be it to cause an erection or stop insomnia—to the tune of \$275 billion dollars spent on pharmaceutical drugs alone last year. These figures do not include over the counter or illicit drugs, or the everyday use of caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine. Did you know that you can buy peppermint scented, caffeinated soap? A can of Red Bull has only 80 milligrams of caffeine but Shower Shock Caffeinated soap has 200 milligrams of caffeine per serving (12 servings per bar). So, you don't even have to stop by the local coffee shop anymore for your legal caffeine 'fix'.

Everything we do can be taken to an extreme and have a harmful impact on our lives. So, we need to look at the relationship between how we feel and whether we maintain only those habits which increase health and well being. In coming to grips with any kind of addiction, it is vital to identify whether we must use increasingly more of the substance for the same effect, find it impossible to use in moderation like other people, are unsuccessful in our efforts to cut down, spend a lot of time thinking about or getting the substance, or whether we continue to use it despite its causing personal problems.

So many people try to correct unpleasant feelings or personality traits chemically, and while this immediate relief may seem practical, drugs rarely fix anything. They do, however, mask symptoms. Symptoms are not problems, but the result of deeper processes and imbalances that should be addressed directly and holistically. Most drugs also have both physiological and psychological actions, and potential for addiction, so it is always wise to prepare for drug/chemi-

By Chance Diebold, NMD

Talking about addiction and addictive behavior is never easy. Many people mistakenly believe that if only one had willpower, they could simply stop drinking or abusing drugs. Yet these abuse disorders need to be treated holistically—body, mind, and spirit—because, without help, addiction is uncontrollable, a craving, which escalates over time. How should we begin to talk about ad-

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diction in a meaningful way, one which helps us to better understand that addiction disorders are complex, occur among all age groups and are not limited to any one socioeconomic class, race, or era? Even in the late 19th century, drugs were not new; very proper people in society were also addicted. Ah, laudanum...how many of those highly regarded Victorian ladies with vague illnesses passed their days resting on a chaise lounge, in essence 'wasted'? They would have voiced ladylike distain at the opium dens, so prevalent at the turn of the last century, whilst failing to see they too were 'junkies'.

Addiction is growing in our society. In fact, few diseases have as much impact on our nation's communities as do addiction disorders. In the United States, over ¼ million deaths occur every year as a result of alcoholism and illegal drug use. Recent studies report the daily use of addictive substances by high school seniors as 2% for marijuana, 9% for cocaine and 4% for alcohol. In fact, alcoholism is the most

cal detoxification by seeking a professional's emotional and spiritual support and fortifying both body and spirit. Avoiding dietary and lifestyle abuses will help the body learn to respond in a more appropriate way. This includes limiting drug use and ending addictive behaviors, which begins with the physical detoxification of the drug from the body.

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All drugs carry with them some toxicity, particularly to the liver, though the entire body is compromised. The initial phase is the most difficult, and its duration can vary from a few days to more than a week. This phase is the actual detoxification, during which chemicals stored within the body are naturally released, and during which an abundance of willpower and commitment is required. This is also a time to get the assistance of a health care practitioner, to work with an addictions specialist, or at least to join a 12 step program, in order to learn new ways to live without addictions.

In addition to a decisive plan and the necessary psychological support, a wholesome, well-balanced diet and the appropriate nutritional supplements are vital. During the transition, supervised fasting or a juice- or food-based cleansing diet is helpful to enhance purification and lessen the severity and duration of withdrawal. Incredible lifestyle changes can be made during a month-long cleansing protocol, and this can be extraordinarily empowering. A cleansing program allows total clarity of mind and body, which can help to refine a sound plan and goals while strengthening willpower and commitment.

An orthomolecular approach to drug detoxification, is based on the idea that naturally occurring substances (such as vitamins, amino acids, trace elements, electrolytes, and fatty acids), can prevent disease and support the body's healing processes. This type of program includes the B vitamins, micro and macro-minerals, high doses of vitamins C, E, and carotenes, zinc, selenium, and specific amino acids. Generally, the amino acids L-

cysteine and glutathione help to decrease the toxicity of most drugs and chemicals, as they are part of the liver's inherent detoxification function. All of these supplements work better with food than with fasting, so a well balanced fruit-and vegetable-based diet is best to follow when supplementing nutrients. This will also increase the body's alkalinity, thus reducing acidity and supporting natural detoxification.

Many people find the use of herbs beneficial in drug detoxification as well. Oregon Grape (*Berberis aquifolium*) root powder is probably the most important, as it contains ingredients that react with acids to form soluble salts, which help clear toxicity and stimulate the liver to better detoxify the body. Valerian root, passion flower, hops, catnip, and other tranquilizing herbs may also help with withdrawal symptoms, such as anxiety or insomnia, and can be used as supplements, tinctures, or teas. Chlorophyll, taken as a liquid, has a mild purifying and rejuvenating quality as well, and offers superb nutrition to a body stressed by detoxification.

Nutritional Detox

The following nutritional program will help your body detoxify and supports the period of rebuilding that continues for about six weeks afterward. The ranges in supplement dosages

Drug Detoxification Nutrient Program

	Water	2-3 qt		
	Fiber	20-40 g		
Vitamin A	10,000 iu		Chromium	200-500 mcg
Beta-carotene	20,000-40,000 iu		Copper	2-3 mg
Vitamin D	200-400 iu		Iodine	150 mcg
Vitamin E	200-800 iu		Iron	10-20 mg
Vitamin K	300 mcg		Magnesium	400-800 mg+
Thiamine (B1)	25-100 mg		Manganese	5-10 mg
Riboflavin (B2)	25-100 mg		Molybdenum	150-300 mcg
Niacinamide (B3)	50-100 mg*		Potassium	100-500 mg
Pantothenic acid (B5)	250-1,000 mg		Selenium	200-300 mcg
Pyridoxine (B6)	25-100 mg		Silicon	50-150 mg
Pyridoxal-5-phosphate	25-50 mg		Vanadium	200-400 mcg
Cobalamin (B12)	100-250 mcg		Zinc	30-60 mg
Folic acid	800 mcg		L-amino acids	1,500 mg
Biotin	300 mcg		L-cysteine	250-500 mg
Choline	500-1,000 mg		L-glutamine	250-1,000 mg
Inositol	500-1,000 mg		Essential fatty acids	2-4 capsules
Vitamin C	2-10 g		or Flaxseed oil	2-4 teaspoons
Bioflavonoids	250-500 mg		Goldenseal root	3 - 6 capsules
Calcium	650-1,200 mg			

*Increase dosage slowly.

+Higher amounts are needed for hyperactive withdrawal states, aches, or cravings.

Addictive Substance Abuse	Restored Brain Chemical	Expected Behavioral Changes	Amino Acid Deficiency Symptoms	Supplement Balance
Heroin Alcohol Marijuana Sweets/Starches Chocolate Tobacco	Enkephalins Endorphins	Reward Stimulation Anti-craving Improved energy and focus. Promotes pain relief Increases pleasure	Sensitivity to physical or emotional pain Craves comfort and pleasure Desires certain foods or drugs.	D-Phenylalanine
Caffeine Speed/Meth Cocaine Marijuana Aspartame Chocolate Alcohol Tobacco Sweets/Starches	Norepinephrine Dopamine	Reward stimulation Anti-craving Anti-depression Increased energy Improved mental focus.	Depression Low energy Lack of focus and concentration Attention-deficit disorder	L-Phenylalanine or L-Tyrosine
Sweets/Starches Alcohol Ecstasy Marijuana Chocolate Tobacco	Serotonin	Anti-craving Anti-depression Anti-insomnia Improved appetite control Improvement in all mood and other serotonin deficiency symptoms Increased energy Improved mental focus.	Low self-esteem Obsessive compulsive behaviors irritability or Rage Sleep problems Afternoon or evening cravings Negativity Heat intolerance Fibromyalgia SAD	5 Hydroxy L-Tryptophan (5-HTP) or L-Tryptophan
Valium Alcohol Marijuana Tobacco Sweets/Starches	GABA	Promotes calmness and relaxation	Feeling of being stressed-out Nervous, tense muscles Trouble relaxing	GABA (Gamma-amino butyric acid)
Alcohol Sweets/Starches	GABA (mild enhancement) Fuel source for the entire brain.	Anti-craving Anti-stress Levels blood sugar and mood GABA (mild enhancement) Fuel source for entire brain	Stress Mood swings Hypoglycemia	L-Glutamine

reflect that different people have different needs, and are based on the level of physical stress and body weight. Each one should be tapered down to the lowest levels, once detox is complete. It's also important to remember to continue to supplement at this low level for about a year, because it takes time for your nervous systems to be restored to healthy function. Before starting this, or any other detox or nutritional program, please check with a health care professional for advice.

Amino Acid Therapy

Each and every cell in the body is affected by substance abuse, and so each is left devastated by addiction. Many ad-

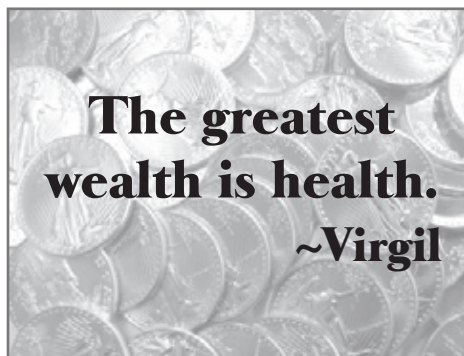
ditions can be traced to chemical imbalances in the body, and can often be removed—or at least offset—by specifically targeted amino acid therapies, which provide a special kind of nutrition that supports brain and nervous systems function.

The brain is primarily comprised of fat, but all of the cell structures, enzymes, and neurotransmitters that make it work are amino acids. These tiny pieces of protein allow signals from the brain to be carried throughout the body, signals that are uniquely balanced for each individual. When a person's innate biochemistry is nutritionally supported, addictive substances permanently discontinued, and nutrients replenished through nutritional therapy, the body's balance can be restored, thus allowing these vital brain signals to be carried more effectively throughout the body.

For an effective therapy, the minimum starting dosage for any amino acid is 500 mg per day, which can be increased gradually to 2-3,000 mg per day (except 5HTP, whose dose is 50 to 300 mg, and should be taken late in the day in two doses, say after lunch and at bedtime, as it tends to cause relaxation). Increase dosages slowly, over several days, until the desired benefits are experienced, then leave it at that level. Most people respond to daily dosages given in doses divided into 2 to 3 times per day. Amino acids are most effective taken on an empty stomach with a full glass of water, and taking a B-complex vitamin at the same time will enhance their effectiveness.

Remember that although addictive characteristics are inherent for some people, living a healthy lifestyle is possible for everyone. If you need help, don't be afraid to reach out – to friends, to family, to professionals. By nature, addiction is a very complex, self-destructive and isolating behavior. Only through a holistic mind-body-spirit connection is it possible to begin the lifelong process of recovery, and in so doing rediscover the joy, empowerment, and peace you deserve.

Chance Diebold is a Naturopathic physician, Reiki Master, Hypnotherapist, in Holden Beach, counseling people on ways to attain their own form of optimal health through nutrition, lifestyle, homeopathy, botanical medicine, hypnotherapy, Reiki, and other natural modalities. She also acts as a patient advocate for those experiencing serious illness or end of life issues, and as a teacher and lecturer on wholistic living and health. For more information, call (910) 297-3636 or go to DrDiebold.com.





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