



## Dealing with Heavy Metals and other Toxins Using Natural, Integrative and Complementary Approaches

by Stephanie Scripter

There are many different types of contaminants in our environment that can be harmful to humans. Toxicants and heavy metals, according to OSHA.gov, (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) are individual metals and metal compounds that can negatively effect people's health. Mercury, lead and arsenic are three com-

mon examples of elements referred to as heavy metals that can be toxic.

Heavy metals occur naturally, but can become concentrated as a result of man-made practices such as mining and industrial wastes, vehicle emissions, fertilizers, paints and plastics. When these are improperly disposed of, they can contaminate the soil and wa-

ter, creating health hazards to humans.

"Human adipose (fat) tissue from U.S. residents has revealed 700+ chemical contaminants that have not been chemically identified while more than 80,000+ chemicals and toxicants have been developed, distributed and discarded into the environment over the past 50 years," says Dr. Doug Cutler, of Cutler Integrative Medicine in Southfield, MI, who has advanced training in Environmental Medicine "The majority of these toxicants have not been tested for potential toxic effects in humans and some of these chemical contaminants are commonly found in the job, at home, in the outdoors, in our foods, in our air, in our water, and even in utero which contribute to human disease."

"With the Flint water crisis and the resulting illness in children and adults alike," he says, "we can take a more proactive approach to prevent the damage caused by lead. The C.D.C. (Centers for Disease Control) says that no safe blood lead level in children has been identified."

"With environmental medicine," says Cutler, "it is never a question if you are toxic, but it is a question of how toxic?"

According to Dr. Cutler, the focus of Environmental Medicine is understanding how environmental factors influence our health and behavior. It is the prevention of biological, chemical



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and toxicant exposures and lowering of the total toxic burden on the body through multiple depuration (cleansing), detoxification and chelation therapy protocols.

Therapies such as intravenous (IV) or oral chelation, homeopathics, full-body cleanses and supplements are used by many practitioners to help detoxify the body.

Also, a variety of gentle options for chelating toxins from the body can be found in nature and are used in different ways to aid in detoxification.

Laura Kovalcik, D.O., of the Downing Clinic, in Clarkston, MI, utilizes IV chelation therapy for detoxing. This takes place during a series of sessions that can span over several months. Administering various nutrients and minerals intravenously has been used for decades, and work in the same way as oral chelation to pull heavy metals from fatty tissue and eventually unburden every system within the body of the harmful toxins.

Ann Heusted, RN, C.N.C., also of The Downing Clinic in Clarkston, affirms that to safely remove toxins it's best to start gradually.

"My personal experiences with heavy metal removal," she explains, "has given me a deep respect for detoxification. When I counsel my patients in detoxification, I make sure their body is ready before we start. We hydrate them with purified water, making sure they eat three meals daily, including all the food groups. We eliminate white food such as sugar, white flour, white pasta and cereals."

Heusted warns that if the body detoxifies too quickly, the toxins will be *forced* deeper into the tissues, so her approach centers around allowing the body time to heal.

"It is best to make one change at a time," says Heusted. "When patients are

sleeping well, experiencing less stress, pain and basically feeling good, then they can begin the full-fledged detoxification. A personalized regimen of herbs and products is allocated gradually. The goal of these remedies is to balance the functions in the body so detoxification can happen."

IV chelation therapies have existed for quite some time, but can have side effects and impact the body's normal functions if not properly administered. For this reason, seeking the advice of a professional trained in IV chelation therapy is important.

Gretchen Perry, M.S.N., F.N.P.-B.C., of Fundamental Healing. P.C., in Southfield, MI, believes the best way to begin removing metals from the body, after a recent exposure, is to consume Bentonite clay added to reverse osmosis water. Bentonite Clay is a form of volcanic ash that has the ability, through absorption, to remove about 25 times its weight in toxins.

"Typically, patients that I see are sick and not in the condition to begin chelation with pharmaceuticals right away due to the nasty side effects they may experience," says Perry. "I start clients on foods like Cilantro, Brazil nuts, almonds, pressed garlic/onion and vitamin C. The Bentonite clay is diluted in water and patients are encouraged to drink it several times a day to aid in pulling toxins out of the system. This will happen naturally once the other nutrients are doing their part inside the body's cells."



Lee Rossano, C.N.C., of Advanced Nutritional Solutions in Lake Orion, MI, addresses detoxing for heavy metals with a holistic, whole body approach.

"This involves a lifestyle change," she explains, "including nutritional supplementation, homeopathy, detoxifying footbaths and identifying and



eliminating food sensitivities. Instead of addressing just the heavy metals we look at the entire body, encompassing all organs including the liver, kidneys, and bowels. This detoxification process allows the body to detox naturally without harsh protocols that cause unneeded, additional stress on the body. It is typically a customizable plan that is easy to implement. Clients who embrace the process of holistic detox find themselves with increased energy, improved mood, and weight loss."

Dr. Hilda Lauderman, of Biblical Health in Davison, MI, recommends an oral chelation using homeopathics.

"After the initial oral chelation," explains Lauderman, "there are two homeopathic remedies that can be used, depending on whether the problem is with arsenic or lead. I also recommend different nutritional supplements to support the organs during the detoxification process."

"I typically recommend an oral supplement containing EDTA (ethylene diamine tetra-acetic acid, a synthetic amino acid)," such as CheleXTM," explains Teresa Birkmeier-Fredal, M.D. of the Restorative Medicine Center in Rochester Hills, MI. In my experience, the oral version can be safer and just as effective as the intravenous version."

"I would also recommend a cleanse in addition to the oral EDTA supplement. This can provide additional detoxification support nutrients to speed up the removal of lead and other heavy metals from the body. This is typically in the form of a detox shake (Xymogen Opticleanse GHI) taken in conjunction with detox drops (Xymogen Drainage)."

In summary, whether you choose some of the therapeutic approaches described here, or decide on other options, be sure to seek the advice of your medical professional before



starting detoxification therapy. By doing this, you can make sure that your choice gives you the most viable options for success in removing heavy metals and/or other toxins from your body.

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