

How IS your Liver?

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By Lynn Mayer, MA, CNC

I want to expand on the topic of protecting your body from becoming a feeding trough for bacteria and viruses, for it is your internal terrain that allows these microbes to thrive. You've heard the phrase...garbage in, garbage out. With your body, unless your organs of elimination are working properly, the garbage stays in and it can get pretty ugly when it does. A very important organ of elimination is your liver. Poor digestion, constipation, excess weight, repeated infections, fatigue, skin conditions, anger, poor sleep, hormonal imbalances such as low thyroid and PMS may have a congested liver at its core.

The garbage? It doesn't often come with big neon signs. The garbage factor in a Deep Fried Twinkie (yes, they exist) is obvious to anyone paying even the slightest bit of attention to health news and common sense. What you can't see is the remnants of the thousands of different pesticides used at 2.5 billion pounds annually or the 5,500 food additives used routinely to color, flavor, sweeten, texturize, stabilize or wax your foods. Dairy and meat sources, unless free-range and organic, harbor antibiotics and hormones; industrial chemical contaminants and mercury are found in our fish.

That's just our food supply. Other toxins that reach our liver for processing are auto exhaust, household cleaning products, tobacco, synthetic mega-vitamins, alcohol, bad fats, dry cleaning solvents, cosmetics and other body lotions and potions that make their way through our skin.

Your body is designed to detoxify itself as a natural function, but today's world puts an enormous burden on the process. One needs a healthy liver to begin. The liver processes your blood at roughly 3 pints every minute, filtering the blood for toxins as well as infectious organisms. The liver has been calculated to have over five hundred functions. If it has been abused or is overwhelmed it loses its ability. The good news is that your liver has great recovery potential if given the proper environment. There are steps you can take to help promote its function. If you are eating correctly, the liver is a much like a self-cleaning oven.

A good morning ritual is to start your day with the juice of a half of a lemon squeezed into some warm water. This helps open up the liver and gets the bile flowing. Bile is the liver and gall bladder's fluid that carries toxins out.

Excellent liver foods that help the detoxification pathways and should be a part of your everyday food plan are *onions, garlic, red peppers, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage, kale, beets, asparagus and the sulphur containing egg yolk. Turmeric, Rosemary and Parsley* are just some of the liver supporting herbs which were historically used more frequently in our diet. Season your foods with these herbs and you'll add liver support as well as flavor.

For a more concerted effort, there are toxicity questionnaires and lab tests to help you determine the toxicity level of your body and how well your liver is functioning. I always suggest professional guidance in the process as there are many detox programs and methods available. The approach I prefer to use is one where the organs of elimination are fully fed and nourished with the nutrients needed to do their job efficiently while concurrently eliminating the toxic offenders. This gives you the opportunity to retrain your body and clean house at the same time. Spring is a wonderful time to do such a program.

You may have seen this week's Oprah telecast where Dr. Oz had on display healthy and diseased liver and colons as well as animations of proper bowel function. Next week I'll give you the scoop on poop. I hope you'll tune in.