

Nancy Utter column from Jan. 8, 2007

Headline:

The new year: Time for winter cleansing

Story:

I love the beginning of the new year. It always feels like a chance for a fresh start, and the possibilities and opportunities seem limitless. As a physician, I also get excited for my patients as I see the possibilities that exist for them in the realm of health. I envision a state of exuberant health and wellness for each person I work with no matter how ill they may be. I believe that the potential for restoration and blossoming of vibrant health always is there waiting to be revealed, even in severe illness.

This is a great time of year to begin or re-start a personal health program. We have just passed through the holidays, which are traditionally a time of excess and overindulgence that can often leave us feeling poorly. The contrast of the post holiday sluggishness and the vision of happiness and health we want to achieve can set us up to see what we want to change in our lives. This can be great motivation to bring in the new year with the promise of feeling our best in body, mind and spirit through taking charge of our health.

Your first step may be a quick, simple winter cleanse if the holidays have left you feeling toxic. This can be a great remedy to get you back on track or help you start your health plan. Many of the traditional medicinal beliefs about health relate illness to a condition called toxemia. Toxemia is basically a state in which the body is overburdened with wastes or toxins. What are toxins? Toxins can be as simple as byproducts of foods that your body does not break down or as complex as heavy metals such as lead and mercury. Helping your body to eliminate these toxins will increase your vitality and health in both the present and the future.

Traditionally, the time for cleansing the body is in the spring when the weather is beginning to get warmer and our bodies are waking up from the winter. A winter cleanse should focus on keeping the body warm and supporting metabolism. Cold and raw foods are cooling to the body, so wintertime is not the best time to use these foods in your diet. A simple winter cleanse could consist of the elimination of all refined foods, sugar, dairy, alcohol, caffeine and trans and hydrogenated fats from your diet while eating only steamed vegetables, whole cooked grains, and small amounts of lean, organic protein such as fish, turkey and chicken. You can do this for a day or a month or adopt it as your

new diet for health. Increase your intake of water and use exercise to encourage your body's elimination of toxins.

There are many other cleansing methods you can use based on your needs and current health condition. Start simple, and if you have a serious health condition please check with your doctor before you begin any dietary or lifestyle changes. Remember, there are many other things you can include in your own personal health plan. From increasing your daily water intake to making sure you have laughter in your life every day, it is all about what works for you! Happy New Year and best wishes for a happy, healthy 2007!

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