

Detox, drainage...and you

By Melissa Heyboer

As chiropractors, you're constantly seeking new approaches in order to improve your practice and get your patients to their highest level of wellness, whether this means implementing a nutrition program or incorporating an exercise regime.

The process of detoxification and drainage, although widely known, is not widely used. According to Lynn Carlson, DC, DACNB, however, this process is one of the most beneficial ways to not only improve the lives of your patients but also your practice.

"As chiropractors, we care about the overall health and wellness of our patients," she said. "We're certainly taking care of those who have acute pain and injury but it's a natural segue for us to talk about health to our patients as well. And toxins are an integral part of our world..."

It is those toxins that are flushed out of the body during the detoxification and drainage process. Although the body itself goes through its own natural detoxification process, Carlson says that isn't always enough.

"The challenge we see as healthcare practitioners," she said, "is that we either have more toxic exposure than our body can get rid of, or that when the organs that are involved in the process, such as the liver, get too overloaded and they can't do their function anymore."

Process

It's for that reason that Carlson, who's been using detox in her Alameda, Calif., practice for two years, says people need to incorporate a separate detoxification system in order

to help facilitate the natural process.

During the detoxification and drainage process, six major organs are used, each serving a very different, yet equally important role. These organs include:

- Lymphatic system – Transports the toxic substances.
- Liver – Helps transform toxic substances into nontoxic, water soluble forms.
- Kidneys – Involved with the filtering of fluids that contain toxins.
- Bowels – Work to protect our bodies from harmful substances and infections.
- Skin – Used in the excretion process of the toxins.
- Lungs – Used in the exhaling of gaseous toxins.

According to Carlson, these organs work to first detoxify, which is the "actual metabolic conversion," and mobilization of the toxins, and then drain, which is the actual releasing of the toxins through sweat and other bodily fluids. The drainage process also aids the mobilization of toxins from where they're stored in the body and the transportation of them to the organs where they can be detoxified.

Benefits

According to Harold Steinberg, DC, DABCN, the detoxification



program isn't limited to one type of patient.

"Sometimes we have patients come in with gastro-intestinal problems, irritable bowel, ulcers, etc.," he said. "But on the other side of the coin you have cancer patients, auto-immune patients, and arthritic patients who'll also need it [detoxification]."

Steinberg, who has used detoxification in his Santa Fe, N.M., practice for 15 years, says these and all patients who use the program usually experience more energy, better digestion of food, and just an overall better sense of well-being.

Aside from the health benefits, both Carlson and Steinberg say incorporating a similar program will also significantly benefit your practice.

"It's complementary to what we

already do as chiropractors," Carlson said. "For the overall health of everyone, it's important to offer a program or protocol to help the body's natural detoxification process."

Frequency

Although most patients wait until symptoms occur before they visit their doctor, Carlson says it's important to incorporate a detox program as a part of your lifestyle.

"Ideally, you don't want to wait until symptoms show up," she says. "When you stay healthy, you support your body so you never get overloaded with toxins and get sick."

Steinberg says that the detoxification process usually lasts approximately 21 days and he

recommends doing it twice a year.


Carlson adds that it's important to find a program that is gentle and gradual. "Sometimes people get exposed to these crash or fad programs that use heavy detox in three to four days. It's a lot of pressure on the system to detox that quickly," she said. "Your organs can't keep up with all the toxins floating around in your blood stream."

In addition to incorporating a detox program into your daily life, it's equally as important to maintain a healthy lifestyle on a daily basis. Here are some tips to doing so:

- Drink at least 32 ounces of water a day and keep a nutritionally balanced diet.
- Reduce stress, get enough sleep, and exercise regularly.

- Reduce the intake of coffee, black tea, and alcohol, and do not smoke.

• Maintain a positive attitude. "Wellness is the key here,"

Steinberg says. "The immune system will fight things it doesn't recognize. But, if they can clear out those things it doesn't recognize, the immune system will be able to fight diseases instead of toxins." 



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