


# Is detox a scam? The truth behind the wellness industry's latest craze

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The **allure of a detox** is undeniable. “Cleanse your body! Eliminate toxins!” These are the promises splashed across countless detox products, from teas and supplements to colon cleanses and juice fasts. I mean, who doesn’t want a quick-fix solution to health problems?

I, too, have fallen for the detox fad. Feeling sluggish and bloated, I embarked on a week-long **juice cleanse**, religiously following the fast and enduring hunger pangs. Honestly, the first few days felt awful, but eventually, I felt lighter and more energised. But was this genuinely a true detoxification, or simply my body adapting to a restricted diet?

Then, I stumbled upon an Instagram reel by the author of ‘Masala Lab’, Krish Ashok, who said, “Here’s a social media tip — run away from the word detox.” I decided to investigate further, and this is what I found.

According to Ashok, the term detox describes a variety of treatments, typically supplements, **diets, or juices**, which promise to cure everything from weight gain to gut health and even skin problems. “But the truth is — they don’t work,” he noted.

## So, what is detox, and does it really work?

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In earlier times, the term ‘detox’ used to have a serious medical meaning. It referred to a hospital or clinical procedure for removing dangerous substances like drugs or poisons from the body. This treatment often involved medications and other therapies tailored to the specific case.

These days, the word ‘detox’ is used very differently. With individuals becoming increasingly interested in general health and wellness, these new detox programs focus on getting rid of supposed toxins that many believe cause problems like headaches, **bloating**, and fatigue. Unlike medical detox, these programs are self-directed, involving the use of special diets or supplements that can be easily bought in stores. While some target specific organs, others claim to cleanse the entire body. However, a closer look reveals a murkier picture.

Dr Sangeeta Tiwari, a clinical nutritionist at Artemis Hospital Lite, NFC, is skeptical of detox products. “As per brands selling detox products, it helps flush out the impurities out of your system, leaving organs clean. But there is no scientific evidence supporting this claim.”

The concept of the body accumulating **toxins** that need purging is simply untrue. “The human body has powerful detoxification mechanisms, primarily involving the liver, kidneys, and digestive tract — designed to efficiently and effectively remove toxins and waste products from the body,” Malvika Fulwani, a clinical dietitian & certified diabetes educator, told [indianexpress.com](https://www.indianexpress.com).

Fulwani also pointed out that those manufacturing detox products may use pseudoscientific concepts and vague language to promote their supposed benefits. She does, however, agree that some products might have mild diuretic or laxative effects, leading to temporary weight loss or the illusion of cleansing. But it’s important to understand that they don’t necessarily enhance the **body’s natural detoxification processes** in the long run.

Even a report published by McGill University in 2023 agrees with the above. It debunks the myth that our colons harbor a significant amount of waste requiring aggressive cleaning. The report clearly states that using external products for colon cleansing is largely pointless and may only lead to more frequent bathroom visits. “We simply do not have mounds of waste built up in our bodies at all times. If that’s true for you, you need medical attention immediately, not a detox product,” it reads.

## So, what is the best way to detox the body?

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While our body already consists of detoxification systems, we can support these organs through a healthy lifestyle. Here are some expert-approved tips to optimise this natural process and promote overall well-being:

*\*Stay hydrated:* Drinking plenty of water helps flush out toxins through urine and sweat. Aim for at least eight glasses of water daily, or more if you’re physically active or in hot weather.

*\*Eat a balanced diet:* Focus on whole, nutrient-rich foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins, and healthy fats. These foods provide essential vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and fiber that support your body’s detoxification pathways.

*\*Include natural detoxifying foods:* Certain foods support detoxification, including **cruciferous vegetables** (such as broccoli, cauliflower, kale, and Brussels sprouts), berries, garlic, onions, ginger, turmeric, and green tea. These foods contain compounds that aid in eliminating toxins from the body.

*\*Limit processed foods and sugar:* Minimise your intake of processed foods, sugary snacks, and beverages, as they can contribute to inflammation and burden the body's detoxification systems.

*\*Get adequate rest:* Sleep for at least 7 to 9 hours every day.

*\*Manage stress:* Practice yoga and meditation to alleviate stress and calm the nervous system.

*\*Physical activity:* Regular exercise or physical activity increases blood circulation and promotes sweat production. It also stimulates digestion and improves liver function, thereby allowing your body to eliminate toxins more effectively.

*\*Detox from the outside:* Make sure to exfoliate your skin and maintain proper hygiene.

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