

CLEAN, GREEN, AND LEAN, by Dr. Walter J. Crinnion, N.D.
Book Report and Comment, by David G. Schwartz, M.D.
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"Detoxification, A Vital Imperative," in the Archives, spoke of the urgency to deal with the many environmental toxins that cause illness. This article focuses more on the specifics of a specialist's advice on how to decrease exposure to toxins and how to expel them. Dr. Crinnion, from his 27 years of practice in helping people recover from many severe health problems through detoxification, presents a practical plan for the average person to understand and implement. He recounts several case studies that vividly portray the journeys several people made from illness to health. A most striking feature of their recovery is that those who were overweight lost a lot of weight without even trying. This gives credence to the theory that obesity is the body's attempt to dilute toxins by storing them in adipose tissue. This brings up the question, "How significant are toxins in our obesity epidemic?"

Dr. Crinnion, with Dr. Joseph Pizzarno, have recently published a textbook, Clinical Environmental Medicine, which I have ordered, and I have attended several lectures and workshops by Dr. Crinnion, and subsequently wrote the article on detoxification, noted above. I knew that patients with high levels of PCB's, chlorinated pesticides, and dioxins lost weight and recovered from diabetes, and I recognized persistent fat soluble toxins to be important in people with hard to treat, severe diseases, but I had not considered that ordinary people with annoying symptoms and overweight conditions could be having problems caused by these toxins that stay in the body fat for years. I had tested my own blood and found very little of those 3 categories present. I had wanted to test many of my patients for these chemicals, but the tests were so expensive and not covered by insurance, that most people opted not to do the tests. Without that proof, it was challenging to motivate people to go through the intense process of detoxification. I also considered that a large part of the toxic load were the water soluble toxins that are quickly eliminated in the urine, and the load goes down as soon as exposure is interrupted. Now, to counter that, consider that the average person has nearly 100 different types of these persistent pollutants in the body. There may be many more kinds of toxins for which we do not have testing available. The problem is probably many more orders of magnitude greater than I had thought for these P.O.P's (persistent organic pollutants). Then, when the shorter lasting toxins are also present, it makes it even more difficult for the body to handle these P.O.P.'s, so we may have a much bigger problem on our hands than I had realized, before I read this book.

Dr. Crinnion's book discusses both the short and long lasting toxins, including the heavy metals, which are stored in many tissues. He presents a very comprehensive plan for decreasing exposure from food, water, and air, and especially in the home environment, which is often more toxic than the outside air. Stopping the exposure reduces the burden of the water-soluble toxins, but active treatments are necessary to eliminate the heavy metals and the P.O.P.'s. It is my major concern now with the P.O.P.'s that may be a main cause for many of the cancers and autoimmune conditions, obesity, and diabetes, and their consequent complications.

Dr. Crinnion did a survey of the many patients who had been in his cleansing program for the previous 5 years. The people with multiple chemical sensitivities, cancer, and autoimmune and neurological conditions had shown great improvement, and those with allergies and fatigue showed moderate improvement. Of all 14 conditions, 37% had good improvement and 46% had great improvement, 8% no change, and 9% slight improvement. He was astounded to find that so many people actually had had such improvement in their health. There was no direct treatment of the symptoms, only removing the toxins, which allowed the body to heal itself naturally. Common symptoms of toxicity he lists are: fatigue, depression, brain fog, balance problems, poor memory, headaches, tremors, allergies, asthma, chemical sensitivity, diabetes, fibromyalgia, autoimmunity, infertility, chronic infections, and Parkinsonism. The people were working regular jobs, not working in a "toxic" industry, nor did they have an unusual toxic incident. They became ill just a little at a time, until it built up to intolerable symptoms. That is the way most people develop a toxic load, a little at a time, doing ordinary things, living ordinary lives. He makes the point that we are all exposed, every time we breathe, drink water, or eat food. Toxins find their way into the Arctic and Antarctic, far away from the sources. That makes it all the more urgent that we pay attention to our own detoxification and that we do what we can to change public policy to stop the tons of chemicals being released into the environment without being properly tested for safety. Refer to my articles on "Whitewash" and "Sicker, Fatter, Poorer."

How often is overweight related to toxicity? The author points out red flags that would alert one to this cause if a person is 10 lbs overweight and has any one of these symptoms: Asthma and allergies, brain fog, depression, fatigue, headaches or chronic pain. If 25 lbs overweight, other additional symptoms such as chemical sensitivity, chronic infection, diabetes, fibromyalgia, infertility, and Parkinsonism may signal toxic load.

He narrates a history of a patient who repeatedly lost weight and then gained it back, typical of most people who try. A fitness center owner described to Dr. Crinnion the repeated pattern of most people who work out and lose weight. After so many pounds lost, they begin to feel ill, with headaches, fatigue, flu-like symptoms, and mood swings. Then they feel better if they start gaining the weight back again. When fat cells lose fat, the toxins are freed up also, and they go into the blood circulation. Researchers in a weight loss clinic found that the more weight a person lost, the higher the chlorinated pesticide levels rose in the blood. Losing 21% of their weight resulted in a 52% increase, and losing 46% of weight caused a 388% increase in the pesticide. The toxins damage mitochondria, the energy producing organelles inside cells. So the increase in circulating toxins causes a decrease in resting metabolic rate. Is that why people report that after losing weight, their metabolic rate drops, they burn fewer calories, and it is much harder to lose any more weight? He makes the point that diabetes is promoted by obesity, but the risk for diabetes is increased by nearly 30x for people with high blood levels of fat-soluble toxins. Not to be forgotten, too much sugar in the diet is also a major cause of obesity and diabetes, and can also be considered to be a toxin, not eaten in its natural state.

Researchers have found 400 different artificial chemical compounds in people's body fat. The Environmental Working Group (EWG) examined cord blood in newborns in 2004 and found 287 toxic chemicals, 180 of which are carcinogenic, and 217 of which can damage the central nervous system. An average of 200 toxins were found per baby, and every baby had at least 101 different toxins. So we start our earthly life with a toxic load. Is it any wonder that childhood cancer rates have risen by 67% since 1950? The USA has the 4th highest rate in the world.

Dr. Crinnion recommends foods to avoid and those to eat more of. The leading sources of chlorinated pesticides are: non-organic beef, non-organic dairy products, non-organic butter, and farm-raised fish. The biggest fish like Tuna and Swordfish accumulate more mercury by eating smaller fish. The author recommends avoiding the "dirty dozen," the vegetables and fruits ranked highest in pesticides by the EWG, or eating them only if organic. The "clean 15" can be eaten even if not organic. He highly recommends berries, green tea, and broccoli (or its cousins, cabbage, kale, collards, etc.), olive oil, omega 3 oils, and to eliminate trans fats and refined sugar. Consider eliminating foods that people are commonly sensitive to such as wheat, gluten, dairy, and refined flour, breads, etc.

Dr. Crinnion recommends "putting your home on a diet." A study in New Jersey, an area where there were a lot of chemical plants, showed that indoor exposure to 11 different solvents was 10 times higher than in outdoor air. Some common indoor pollutants are: combustion by-products from fireplaces, furnaces, stoves, smoking, candles, water heaters, and attached garages. Then there are solvents from paint, glue, carpeting, cleaners, and perfumes. Dust comes from molds, animal dander, indoor building supplies, and pesticides.

Airtight, energy efficient buildings decrease air exchange and concentrate toxins. Replacing real plywood with chipboard outgases more formaldehyde and solvents, replacing hardwood floors with padding and carpeting releases solvents and plastics. Pressboard laminated furniture, polyurethane foam and polyester fiberfill in sofas, upholstery fabrics, and plastic furniture, outgas solvents, plastics, and formaldehyde, and home office computers, copiers, etc., outgas ozone, plastics, and solvents. New paint, new carpeting, new cabinetry, and new furniture can take 5-15 years to finish off-gassing.

He recommends top 10 ways to reduce exposure to solvents and other toxins: Make the house a shoe-free zone. No smoking. Organic dry-cleaning or keep cleaned clothes in the garage a week before bringing into the house. Unscented laundry detergent. No "air fresheners" that release solvents. Replace furnace filters every 6 weeks with MERV (minimum efficiency reporting value) of 7-9, and don't let anyone spray air fresheners in the ducts. Get air purifier for bedroom that is charcoal and HEPA. Best are IQAir and Blueair. Replace carpeting with tile or stone or real wood (not pressboard with a thin veneer of wood on top). Get any mold taken care of completely by a competent contractor, not just cover it up. Install a chlorine filter on the showerhead (if using city water).

Wall to wall carpeting is a major source of contaminated air. The EPA itself had to remove 27,000 square yards of carpeting to make its building less sick. The author tabulates a partial list of 40 chemicals found in carpets, several of which are neurotoxins. Ninety % of 400 mice exposed to air blown over carpet samples were neurotoxic. Carpets are magnets for dust, dirt, mold spores, pesticides and lead dust, a good reason by itself to take off shoes at the door. Shoes are one of the biggest sources of contaminants in the home. Carpet and floor surfaces, rather than old paint, are the main sources of elevated lead levels in toddlers' blood.

In cooking, get rid of non-stick pans, stop using food from cans (lined with bisphenols). Don't put hot food in plastic or microwave in plastic, prefer wax paper to plastic wrap or bags. Filter water with carbon or reverse osmosis. Use dishwashing liquid without triclosan.

Personal care products such as soaps, perfumes, and cosmetics are loaded with toxic chemicals. Musk xylene (MX) and musk ketone (MK) are the most common chemical bases for scents in perfumes, and they get absorbed into the body. The higher the level of MK in the blood of young women, the more PMS they had. Women with higher levels of MX had more infertility and miscarriages. The EWG found 16 different chemicals commonly used as preservatives in cosmetics and body care products in blood and urine of young women. They were in the family phthalates, triclosans, parabens, and musk, all linked with hormone disruption and cancer. The author recommends getting USDA certified organic products, or some seal of purity like Premium Body Care, The Natural Seal, or Certified Natural Cosmetics.

Dr. Crinnion lays out a detailed 4-week plan to go green and clean, with specifics for 1 – food choices, 2 – the home on a diet, 3 – improving detoxification, and elimination through kidneys, colon, and skin, 4 – supplements. Before commencing, review symptoms, blood tests, and other health issues, set goals, and establish a support team.

Regarding supplements, he recommends a high potency multivitamin-mineral combination, with a little larger amount of Vitamin B-1 (thiamine) 100mg, B-2 (riboflavin) 50mg, B-6 100mg, Magnesium 500mg, alpha lipoic acid 50mg, n-acetyl cysteine 1500mg/day, and selenium 200mcg, and extracts of broccoli, dandelion, green tea, milk thistle, turmeric, and rooibos. These supplements aid in detoxification and protect against some of the damage of the toxins. It is appalling to me that so many health experts say to eat a balanced diet with plenty of the nutrient dense foods, and you don't need supplements. My question is, "What planet do you live on?"

In regard to the concept of toxins causing us to hang on to body fat, certain supplements and foods specifically help in expelling those fat soluble P.O.P's. Just taking them is not likely to do the job, but following the whole clean and green plan to keep from getting re-exposed to those toxicants, is necessary to assist in the whole process. Given that, here are some of the things that help to expel the fat-soluble toxins that get dumped into the gut from the liver and gallbladder, to keep them from being reabsorbed into the circulation around and around again, which is what they usually do.

Rice bran fiber (other grain fibers don't work) 6 grams/day, greens like kale, etc., chlorophyll, chlorella, and green tea all help to absorb these toxins and "send them packing" out the rectum. Olestra in Pringles potato chips is a non-absorbable fat that also latches on to these fat-soluble toxins and takes them on out the bowels. The trouble with this is anal leakage or stool incontinence, which made Pringles less popular. Another substance that can also expel fat in the stool is Orlistat, a pancreatic lipase inhibitor, but that also has the problem of anal leakage. Less potent pancreatic lipase inhibitors, without the problem of stool incontinence are horse chestnut, wild rose, wild yam, Panax ginseng, and tea. Another drug that inhibits fat absorption that the author does not mention is cholestyramine, which also has its problems of constipation and gas. It is important to remember that with any of these substances that interrupt the digestion and absorption of fat, that the beneficial fats and fat-soluble vitamins, A,D,E, and K, can also be stopped from being usable. So taking the fat-blocking supplements at a time far apart from food and vitamins would be wise.

About the last third of the book is devoted to recipes. Excellent, clean, green and lean foods.

To the average person, this may seem like a monumental task to follow this book's plan for a cleaner life, and the goal may seem to be to feel better and to lose weight, but my main exhortation to people to follow Dr. Crinnion's plan is that it also may just prevent getting cancer, a crippling autoimmune disease, or some other chronic condition causing much suffering, if not death. Our whole planet needs this. The less we buy of products that have those toxic chemicals, be it foods or household items or personal care products, the less we support the manufacturing of pollutants for our home planet. This book is an excellent resource for people to tackle the problems of pollution and to maybe save their lives.