

3 Reasons you should do an armpit cleanse

While many people have considered doing a juice cleanse, probably far fewer have ever thought about doing an *armpit* cleanse!

Chances are the latter would benefit far more people than the juice cleanse would, especially those who have been wearing conventional antiperspirants or deodorants for quite some time.

Not only will an armpit cleanse clean out the build-up of toxins on the skin, but it may reduce the volume and odor of your sweat, boost the immune system and decrease your cancer risk.

Here's everything you need to know about how and why to detox your 'pits.

The Lowdown on Using Conventional Deodorants and Antiperspirants

About 95% of Americans use deodorant, making it an *\$18 billion a year* industry. But in a bid to stave off body odor, most of us are subjecting ourselves to a host of unwanted side effects.

In a nutshell, some reasons to stop using your store-bought deodorants include:

Their long list of chemical ingredients – which include aluminum, phthalates, formaldehyde, parabens and even pesticides! This list is scary enough, but the concerns around putting these toxins on our skin is compounded by the belief that applying chemicals topically may actually *be worse than eating them*, because they enter the bloodstream without any filtering.

The side effects of these chemicals – such as hormone disruption, cancer, Alzheimer's, antibiotic resistant bacteria, allergies, skin irritation, weight gain, inflammatory responses, thyroid dysfunction and more!

Their declining effectiveness – although they're not sure why antiperspirants stop working after a certain time period, experts recommend switching brands every six months to ensure consumers stay dry and odor free.

Not everyone needs deodorant – a lucky few (the same people who have pale, flaky earwax!) don't actually produce any armpit odor and so don't require deodorant – yet 75% of these people still wear it!

Antiperspirants don't work – despite being laden with chemicals, these products don't even live up to their name. The FDA only requires that a brand reduce sweat by 20% in order to claim it provides 'all day protection', while 'extra strength' products need only cause a 30% reduction in dampness!

Sweating is healthy – perhaps the most important reason to avoid antiperspirant is because our bodies need to sweat in order to stay cool, eliminate toxins and support proper immune function. After all, we're born with between two million and four million sweat glands for a reason!

Detox from these products by doing an armpit cleanse and start afresh!

Antiperspirants, Deodorants and Breast Cancer

Although there is a long list of health concerns connected to the toxic ingredients that make up conventional underarm products, one of the most controversial links at the moment is the one between these products and breast cancer.

About 1 in 8 US women will develop invasive breast cancer over the course of her lifetime. Besides skin cancer, breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer among American women – with just under 30% of newly diagnosed cancers in women expected to be of the breast.

Breast cancer death rates are higher than those for any other cancer in women (besides lung cancer) with 40,450 women expected to die this year from the disease.

With statistics like these, experts are looking at possible causes for this type of cancer. Given the proximity of the breast to the underarm, it's no surprise that deodorant and antiperspirant use has come under scrutiny.

According to one research paper, published in the Journal of Inorganic Biochemistry, "*Clinical studies showing a disproportionately high incidence of breast cancer in the upper outer quadrant of the breast...provide supporting evidence for a role for locally applied cosmetic chemicals in the development of breast cancer*".

The author goes on to recommend that, given the wide use of antiperspirants, more studies are vital to discover the link between long term, low level chemical absorption from cosmetics through the armpits and the increasing incidence of breast cancer.

A 2014 report points the finger specifically at aluminum in antiperspirants as the main carcinogen, and other research has found that the age of breast cancer diagnosis was significantly earlier in women who used antiperspirant deodorants and shaved their underarms more frequently.

In addition to aluminum, the Breast Cancer Fund highlights other common ingredients in deodorants and antiperspirants that may also increase breast cancer risk including triclosan, phthalates and parabens.

3 Reasons to do an Armpit Cleanse

Along with wanting to reduce exposure to chemicals and subsequent risk of breast cancer and other illness, you should consider detoxing your armpits if:

1. You are trying to switch to a natural deodorant and struggling in the process.

Often, people experience an uncomfortable rash or excessive sweating and smell when transitioning from a chemical based deodorant to a more natural alternative.

However, studies have shown that regular use of conventional deodorants and antiperspirants can change the bacterial microbiome in your armpits, causing an overproduction of bad bacteria which contribute to *a worse odor when you stop using them*. A simple detox will get the bacteria back in balance and you'll smell naturally fresh every day.

2. You have a sticky or filmy build-up in your armpits.

Many sweat-stopping formulations can leave a strange or sticky film under the arms that doesn't even wash away in the shower! This may be down to the worrisome active ingredient aluminum, which clogs the pores to stop sweating. A detox can pull out some of the chemicals in the skin tissue around the armpit and remove this residue.

3. You frequently get sick or notice enlarged lymph nodes on the neck.

Catch every bug that's going around the office? You may also notice a lump or even spots on the side of your neck or in the armpit. These are enlarged lymph nodes and are a sign that your lymphatic system is struggling to usher chemicals and other foreign invaders out of your system. The end result is a sluggish immune system.

What You Can Expect from a Cleanse

You should notice one or more of the following:

- Less odor – sometimes even when not wearing a natural product.
- Less irritation and perspiration after using natural deodorants.
- No more product build-up in your armpits.
- Improved lymphatic function and a reduction in illness.

How to Do an Armpit Cleanse

Cleansing your 'pits is a much easier process than you might expect and it calls for only two natural ingredients!

You'll need:

- 1 tablespoon **bentonite clay**
- 1 teaspoon of **raw apple cider vinegar**

Directions:

1. Mix the clay and vinegar with a spoon or two of water to achieve a paste-like consistency.
2. Spread a thin layer of this mixture on each armpit, allowing it to work its magic for about 15 minutes*.
3. Rinse off the mask in the shower using a soft washcloth and dry the armpits thoroughly after your shower. You can then apply a natural deodorant if you wish, or go au natural.
4. Repeat this process daily until your body odor has settled down and you can apply a natural deodorant without unwelcome side effects.
5. Finally, vow never to go back to your conventional, chemical-laden antiperspirant or deodorant!

*If you feel pain after application, you should rinse off the mask immediately, although it's more likely you will experience a tingling or warm sensation as blood flow to the area increases – this is normal.

Tips

- Make sure to drink plenty of water each day which will support your body's natural cleansing and detoxifying abilities.
- Try dry brushing your skin to improve lymph and blood circulation.
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Support an Armpit Cleanse through Diet

Although lifestyle factors play a role in our health, our diet has a massive impact on how we look and feel. You can support your armpit health – both during and after your cleanse – by making the right meal choices. For optimum health, ensure you eat a balanced diet of vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, high-quality protein, healthy fats and whole grains.

In addition, certain foods cause the body to sweat more. If you're struggling with excessive dampness or body odor, limit your intake of:

- Spicy foods
- Garlic and onion
- Caffeine
- Alcohol

- Processed, fatty and sugary foods

On the other hand, herbs like parsley, basil, mint, sage and rosemary, along with supplements like chlorophyll and wheat grass, are said to be natural body deodorizers.

Staying hydrated and getting enough water soluble Vitamins B and C will encourage toxins to be eliminated via the urine rather than the skin.

Finally, reduce or eliminate the meat from your diet. A 2006 study carried out in the Czech Republic, found that vegetarians have a '*significantly more attractive, more pleasant, and less intense*' odor than their omnivorous counterparts.

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