

# Foundations of Health – Detox

## Reducing Toxin Exposure

We advise all our patients to reduce their exposure to common toxic pollutants found in foods, water and the environment. While many people appear to cope well with 'normal' levels of chemicals entering their bodies, those with significant health problems (such as CFS/ME or Migraines), children and the elderly, may be at much greater risk of complications due to side effects from these exposures.

## Filter water for drinking and cooking

Water filtration helps to eliminate unwanted chlorine, MTBE (a banned petrol additive which is in most water supplies), pharmaceuticals, microplastics, bacteria and any lead or other heavy metals which may be present.

### Checking your water:

In the past, lead was widely used for everything from plumbing to electronics. It is now known that over time, exposure to lead can affect health, with the greatest risk being to children and pregnant women. The Government has banned the use of lead in many products, and it has not been used for water pipes since 1970. However, third of properties in the North West built before 1970 are believed to still have some lead plumbing. If you live in an older property, your supply pipe – the underground pipe that connects your home to the public water mains – could be made of lead, and there's a chance that there may be some lead pipes inside your home. If you have any concerns that there may be lead supplying water to your home than we advise checking your water as this will affect your best choice of water filtration system.

Basic Screen for lead only: <https://thewaterprofessor.com/collections/our-tests/products/lead-water-test?variant=44902267224356>

For comprehensive water screening options we recommend Ivario: <https://ivario-lab.co.uk/>

### Filter Recommendations:

Working out which type of filter to buy can be tricky – it will depend on your budget, whether your pipes contain lead (in which case you need to ensure your system effectively deals with this), and whether you have space for an under-sink or large drum filter. You can find lots of information on the available options in this article from Water Filter Mag: <https://www.waterfiltermag.com>

## Jug Filters:

Jug filters are easy to use, compact and don't cost a fortune. However, while they will reduce lead and copper, chlorine and bacteria, they will not remove them completely (some jugs will still leave 50% of the lead behind). However, it's better than nothing, the best rated jugs include:

**The Aarke Glass Jug Filter:** <https://www.aarke.com/uk/explore-purifier> (removes 90-100% of lead)

**The Culligan Zerowater Filter:** <https://zerowater.co.uk/collections/all> (claims to remove 99% of lead)

If you have more space on your countertop, we like the Berkey:

**A Berkey Filter:** <https://berkey-waterfilters.co.uk/> (removes over 99% of lead).

## Reverse Osmosis Systems:

Reverse Osmosis systems remove 95-99%+ of impurities in water (you get what you pay for). But if you still have lead pipes in place they can only reduce (and not eliminate), lead levels. There's a good article on this here:

[https://www.waterdropfilter.co.uk/collections/reverse-osmosis?srsId=AfmBOopnsJjqWuG87YoUG1\\_I9DPvvZ0nfZuuS2L8iUhN7-fNL0vx3dhl](https://www.waterdropfilter.co.uk/collections/reverse-osmosis?srsId=AfmBOopnsJjqWuG87YoUG1_I9DPvvZ0nfZuuS2L8iUhN7-fNL0vx3dhl)

## Whole House Filtration:

If your budget will stretch to it, then whole house filtration systems are also an excellent solution and will also ensure that water in your bathroom is also filtered. You can read more information on whole house filtration systems here:

<https://waterfiltershop.co.uk/whole-house-filtration-systems.html>

## Avoid Aluminium, Copper and Teflon / Non-stick surfaces in pans:

Copper and Aluminium exposure has been linked to increased risk of dementia and neurological toxicity. Teflon (PTFE), releases toxic gases, including fluoropolymers which have been linked to liver and kidney problems, high blood pressure in pregnant women and thyroid disorders.

Instead, choose non-toxic pans, skillets, and pots made of cast iron or steel, ceramics or glass. Learn how to make your own non-toxic, non-stick pans by seasoning it with olive or coconut oil. There's a good guide on how to do this here:

<https://www.serious-eats.com/how-to-season-cast-iron-pans-skillets-cookware>

Brands of innovative, non-stick ceramic cookware which we like include:

**Greenpan:** <https://greenpan.co.uk/pages/the-original-greenpan>

**Xtrema:** <https://xtrema.co.uk/pages/our-story>

**Caraway:** <https://www.carawayhome.com/our-materials/>

## Don't apply Aluminium-containing Anti-perspirants:

This includes the prescription medication Driclor (often used for hiperhydrosis). These deodorants can also cause increased levels of toxic aluminium in the brain and have been linked to increased risk of breast cancer. There are loads of effective, non-toxic, great smelling and effective products on the market and even readily available in your local supermarket.

Non-Toxic Antiperspirant Options:

- Get Fussy:** <https://www.getfussy.com/pages/about>
- Wild:** <https://wearewild.com/products/deodorant>
- Ben&Anna:** <https://benandanna.uk/shop/deodorants>
- EarthConscious:** <https://www.earthconscious.co.uk>
- Bionsen:** <https://bionsen.uk>

## Check personal care products for common toxins

These include parabens, sodium-lauryl-sulphate, heavy metals (sunscreens and deodorants) and triclosan (an oestrogen mimic in hand washes and some toothpaste). If you are sensitive, also be aware of gluten, milk and soy in many of the more 'natural' products too. Look for safe alternatives in health food stores and online. Brands for clean personal products which the clinic team uses and would recommend include:

**Weleda** for beautiful creams, deodorants and non-toxic toothpaste.

<https://www.weleda.co.uk>

**Green People** also have a great range of personal and beauty products on offer.

<https://www.greenpeople.co.uk>

**Yoni Products** – for perfume-free and artificial absorbents-free period products.

<https://yoni.care/products/pads/>

**Kingfisher Natural Toothpaste** <https://www.kingfishertoothpaste.co.uk>

**REN Skincare:** <https://www.renskincare.com>

**Avalon Organics:** <https://www.avalonorganics.com>

## Limit Phytoestrogen Exposures

Avoid eating out of plastic packaging and drinking from water bottles which may contain BPA and phthalates as these are oestrogenic – even in the tiny doses which pass into our foods stored in them.

Never microwave in plastic and look for inventive ways to keep food out of contact with plastics using glass and steel where possible.

## Glass Containers for Food storage and cooking:

Amazon and Ikea both have great glass storage containers which can go in the oven, microwave or freezer.

<https://www.ikea.com/gb/en/cat/food-containers-20606/>

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Glass-Food-Storage-Containers-Airtight/dp/B089VNJSXR>

## Better Water Bottle Selection:

Swap plastic water bottles for steel or glass alternatives. However, check carefully, and avoid aluminium or metal bottles with a BPA coating inside (as these can also be toxic), and choose stainless steel or titanium instead. If you're at home rather than out and about, Glass is a great option.

## Choose cleaner household products

Switch cleaning products to less toxic and more environmentally friendly brands – especially if they are used in areas which will come into contact with your skin or food. Brands such as Method and Ecover are widely available in Supermarkets, but if you check locally you may also be able to source refillable, plastic free options.

**Friendly Soap Products**     <https://friendlysoap.co.uk/products/laundry-powder>

**Ecover**     <https://www.ecover.com>

**Method**     <https://methodproducts.co.uk>

**BioD**     <https://biod.co.uk/shop/laundry/>

**Miniml**     <https://minimlrefills.co.uk>

**Simple Living Eco**     <https://simplelivingeco.com>

We love our local refillable / Zero-Waste shops – Have a look to see if there are versions near you. We also have patients who make their own non-toxic household cleaners. There is a great article on getting started here:

<https://www.gomacro.com/non-toxic-cleaning-products/>

## Choose Clean, Lower Toxin Foods

Our Food Plans place emphasis on eating clean foods for life and reducing exposure to harmful environmental toxins such as plastics, heavy metals and pesticides. There are many ways to minimize intake of these substances including:

**Choose lean, organic meats** (grass fed if possible), over fatty cuts, as pesticides concentrate in fat.

**Peel off the skin or remove the outer layer of leaves of leafy produce.** You can remove surface pesticide residues, waxes, fungicides, and fertilizers by soaking the food in a solution of sodium Bicarbonate (1 teaspoon to every 2 cups of cold water), then rinsing

well. Wash produce before peeling it so dirt and contaminants aren't transferred from the knife onto the fruit or vegetable.

**Choosing low Mercury Fish:** Fish associated with the highest mercury content include marlin, shark, swordfish, tilefish, and tuna. These should be avoided completely but we do want you to enjoy the benefits of the **SMASH** fish:

**Sardines**

**Mackerel**

**Anchovies**

**Salmon** (wild caught, not farmed). Eg: Leap <https://www.leapwildfish.co.uk>

**Herring**

Other small non predator fish such as trout and shellfish (scallops and clams), can also be a good option. Chalk Stream trout is a good sustainable and non-toxic farmed fish option.

## Choosing Organic Produce

We know from experience that supermarket shopping and recent cost-of-living increases doesn't really make this an easy choice. However, this way of farming produces healthy food without contamination from persistent pesticides. Many of these chemicals have been linked to chronic health problems (including cancer and arthritis), especially among farmworkers who can be exposed to very high levels of these toxins.

In addition, organic farming methods are friendlier to the environment and help to support pollinating insects which are threatened by modern intensive agriculture.

If you are struggling to find organic shops near to you there are now many online delivery services offering weekly fresh and seasonal produce which can be delivered to your door. The ones we have tried and like include:

**Abel&Cole:** With an amazing and expanding line of Ethically sourced organic food and clean personal and household products online. <https://www.abelandcole.co.uk>

**Riverford:** Offering ethically sourced, organic Fruit and veg  
<https://www.riverford.co.uk>

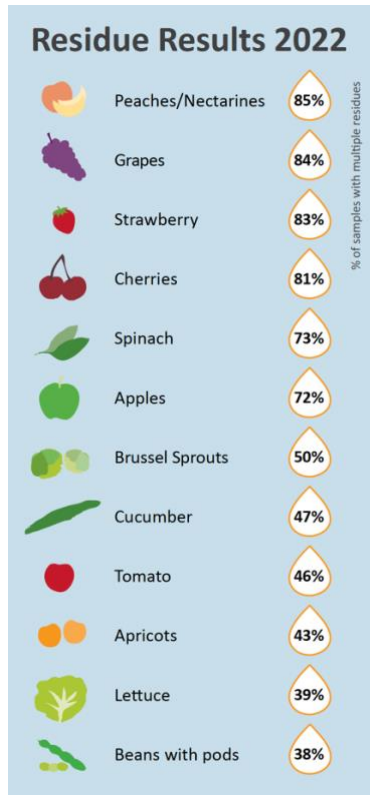
**Planet Organic:** Massive range of organic produce  
<https://www.planetorganic.com>

A fully organic diet can be difficult and expensive to achieve but the Pesticide Action network UK have done loads of work to help you make informed choices about your shopping habits and list the worst offenders on their website each year (alongside those foods least likely to be contaminated). You can read about their work here:

<https://www.pan-uk.org>

PAN have a great advice on **gardening without pesticides** here for the green-fingered among you: <https://www.pan-uk.org/gardening-without-pesticides/>

**The Dirty Dozen List:** The PAN Annual 'Dirty Dozen' List is available as a download here: <https://www.pan-uk.org/dirty-dozen/> These are the foods most likely to be highly contaminated. Due to the delay on released data, the most recent information is from the 2022 survey below:



## Dietary Methods for Improving Toxin Elimination

Toxins can be cleared in a number of ways and we can support the natural detox processes through good nutrition, hydration and by encouraging sweating (by exercise or sauna use):

**Keeping Hydrated:** Most people need at least 1.5-2L of water daily. This can be as hot or cold drinks.

**Avoid Constipation:** Aim for 2-3 soft evacuations per day. Speak to our Nutritional therapists if constipation is an issue for you. Good hydration and fiber intake can be really helpful. Adding chia and linseeds to your diet can really help. Perhaps try a delicious chia pudding recipe: <https://feelgoodfoodie.net/recipe/3-ingredient-chia-pudding/>

**Nutrition for Detox support:** It may surprise many to learn that we are not advocates of the juicing and fasting approach for detox (although these may have their place). Instead, we encourage our patients to actively increase intake of protein, fiber and micronutrients which can help to improve the natural detox processes in the liver. This is a big topic and our Detox Food Plan discusses this topic in more detail here:

<https://drsarahdavies.online/document/detox-food-plan/>

## Sauna for Detox

Sauna therapy can be used to improve detoxification by helping to eliminate toxins in sweat and the new infra-red saunas are also shown to help liberate toxins stored in fat cells for detox processing. Sauna can help in mood disorders and chronic pain and may also reduce cardiovascular disease and Alzheimer's Disease risks.

You can read more about the health benefits of the different kinds of Sauna here:

<https://drruscio.com/infrared-sauna/>

**Traditional (high heat) Sauna:** If you are relatively healthy and able to enjoy regular exercise at a local gym, then using the traditional high heat sauna 2-3 times a week is likely to be ideal (and cheaper than trying to install one at home).

**Infra-Red Sauna:** These are generally divided into near Infrared (red light, moderate heat), and Far Infra-Red (can be almost cool, wavelengths are invisible to the human eye). One of the benefits of Infra-red sauna is that small units and even blanket versions can be purchased for home use much more affordably than a

**Near Infra-Red:** This warm red light can help with pain relief, improving circulation and healing in the skin layers.

**Far Infra-Red:** For those who struggle with high heat or have low blood pressure or POTS, a Far Infra-Red (FIR) blanket or mat might be more appropriate than risking over-heating in a higher heat sauna. FIR heats the body from within and can be very effective for detox from the fat layers under the skin.

**Full Spectrum** sauna units offer the combined benefits of both near, mid and far-infra red.

### How to Sauna:

**Start Slow:** Always start with very short sauna sessions (they can release toxins from the fat layer under the skin very rapidly), and work up slowly. At first you may find that with Infra-red sauna you don't sweat much – this is common at first, have patience.

**Shower immediately** after to ensure all toxins are washed off the skin (to prevent them from being re-absorbed).

**Remember to rehydrate** and also replenish essential minerals with electrolyte solution.

We like the one from Elete:

[https://naturaldispensary.co.uk/products/Elete\\_Electrolyte\\_120ml-8755-0.html](https://naturaldispensary.co.uk/products/Elete_Electrolyte_120ml-8755-0.html)

### Consider Home Sauna use:

Home sauna purchase or hire is possible and perhaps not as expensive as you might think. Little space is required for the portable Mat saunas and these may be a possibility for you. Try to choose a device with low EMF. Recommended options include:

**Clearlight:** At the luxurious end of the market, these are high end cabin saunas which will need some space but can offer the full Infrared spectrum:

<https://www.infraredsauna.co.uk>

**Near Infrared Sauna UK:** As the name might suggest, this company specialises in New Infra-Red and I have a few patients that love their saunas:

<https://www.nearinfraredsauna.co.uk>

**Sunlighten:** From luxury cabins to a portable solo system which can be easily stored, this company offers options of whole spectrum and targeted Infra-red saunas:

<https://www.sunlighten.com/gb-en/saunas/>

**GetFitt:** This company specialises in Ultra-low EMF Far-Infra-Red saunas which are portable and also available for hire (for those who aren't sure it's for them). <https://www.get-fitt.com>

## Lymphatic Drainage Techniques

Lymph is a clear fluid which flows through the body carrying the lymphocytes (white blood cells), which help to fight infection and destroy abnormal or damaged cells. The lymph filters through the body and enters the lymph nodes where bacteria and damaged cells are processed. The fluid also collects toxins from around the cells and will transport them back into the bloodstream to be processed.

Due to its role in toxin transport, activities which speed up lymphatic drainage back into the bloodstream can occasionally cause increased feelings of toxicity (fatigue, headache, soreness), in sensitive patients. Therefore (as with sauna), we recommend that you build up slowly if you want to work on your lymph system.

There are three main ways to speed up lymphatic drainage:

**Exercise:** Movement, deep breathing and postural changes (such as in Yoga), can be great to help improve lymphatic drainage. Adrienne has a great workout designed specifically for Lymph drainage: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYQwM84IED4>

**Dry Skin Brushing** encourages improved circulation to the skin layers and helps with lymphatic drainage. The movements need to be done in specific directions (towards the heart), and there's a great set of instructions here:

<https://www.atoztherapies.com/post/how-to-do-body-dry-brushing>

**Massage:** With or without Aromatherapy oils, massage is great for shifting toxins out of the tissues and into the bloodstream to be processed. If you feel tired or sluggish after a massage, it may be partly due to processing more toxins. Self-massage can be very helpful and there's a great video-guide here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyOKODs47JA>