

Liver Cleaning Foods!

The primary functions of the liver are:

1. The production and excretion of bile (fat emulsification), bilirubin and cholesterol
2. Filtration of toxins, medications and cellular debris
3. Metabolism of fats, proteins and carbohydrates

Your liver health is nothing to play around with, so feeding it and your body beneficial foods only makes good sense. One of the best things you can do for your liver is to eat a healthy, plant-based diet rich in antioxidants, rich in naturally cleansing properties like fiber and water, and one that contains non-acidic proteins that are friendly to your body.

Here are 10 of the top liver-friendly foods to include in your diet, which aid in daily cleansing, rejuvenation, detoxification, and nourishment for the vital organ in your body:

1. Beets

Beets are bright and beautiful, like an insane shot of wellness for your whole body, including your liver. Their red, purplish hues may seem a bit overwhelming, but nature was smart in the way she created foods to mimic the benefits they have on the body. For example, beets look like the color of blood, and coincidentally, they naturally cleanse and purify the blood, which boosts liver function, and nutrient production in your body.

Beets are also high in antioxidants and important nutrients including: folate, fiber (in the form of pectin), iron, betaine, betalains, betacyanin, and betanin. Pectin is a soluble form of fiber that's well known for its cleansing properties and ability to keep you full.

Beets' fibers and nutrients help the body flush toxins that are often stored in our liver so they can be evacuated out of the body instead of reabsorbed into the bloodstream. But, don't be shocked if your stool or urine get reddish once you start eating these superfoods!

2. Broccoli

Shaped like mini trees, broccoli gives life to your body and its bright green hues indicate the high level of antioxidants and chlorophyll found in the cruciferous veggie. Broccoli is high in fiber that naturally cleanses the body from carcinogens and other toxins. Broccoli, cauliflower, Brussels sprouts, and other members of the cruciferous veggie family also contain glucosinolates which help the liver produce enzymes to aid in the removal of toxins and aid in digestion. Broccoli is also a good source of fat-soluble Vitamin E, an especially important antioxidant for the liver.

3. Sweet Potatoes

Sweet potatoes (along with carrots and winter squash such as butternut and pumpkin) are all rich in beta-carotene, which is a natural anti-inflammatory nutrients your body loves! Beta carotene converts to Vitamin A in the body, directly in the liver. It's important to get your Vitamin A through beta-carotene rich foods in place of supplements. Supplements with too much Vitamin A can be toxic to the liver since Vitamin A is a fat soluble vitamin (meaning more gets stored than excreted.) Sweet potatoes and other foods rich in Vitamin A, however, do not cause liver toxicity and cannot be stored for long-term use like supplements can. Sweet potatoes are also rich in fiber and Vitamin C, other cleansing and immunity-boosting nutrients that help your liver function at its best.

4. Lemons

Lemons love your liver and your liver loves them right back! Lemons are a natural cleansing food and essentially one of the best to “get things going” in all areas of your body. Lemons provide a wealth of antioxidants, primarily Vitamin C, and they help your liver produce more enzymes which give you more energy and help with digestion.

Lemons are also a natural replacement for salt in the diet since they’re high in electrolytes that support your body and are often recommended as a salt replacement for individuals on a liver disease diet for this reason. Lemons are also alkalizing to the body, despite being acidic on their own. Once they enter the body, they help neutralize toxins, excrete wastes, and jump starts the entire digestive process. Use organic lemons since you don’t want any chemicals from conventional lemon peels interfering with their benefits.

5. Lentils

Speaking of lentils, your liver loves them too! Lentils are rich in fiber, which assists with the cleansing process and they’re also a natural source of plant-based protein. Too much protein is not recommended since it can be especially hard on the liver. Lentils provide just enough protein to support your body without causing any harm. They’re also some of the easiest legumes to digest, which will help your body use them better for nutrient distribution.

6. Minimal Amounts of Healthy Fats

Healthy fats are important to any diet, plant-based or not, but too much is never a good thing when it comes to fats. Your liver needs fat for proper function, but too much can cause problems with bile production, which will affect the digestion of fats and possibly other issues of digestion. Healthy fats that are beneficial for your liver include: avocados, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, and almonds, along with olives, coconut, chia seeds, and flax seeds. Other

nuts and seeds are also beneficial, but be sure to avoid most oils, which can be hard on the liver to process and distribute into nutrients. Some exceptions include small amounts of olive, flax, or coconut oil. Avocados and walnuts are especially rich in properties that help your body produce more glutathione, which is used for the detoxification and filtration of harmful substances.

7. Apples

Apples are rich in pectin, the soluble fiber that helps remove toxins and excess cholesterol from the blood, which helps your liver big time! They're also rich in malic acid, a naturally cleansing nutrient that removes carcinogens and other toxins from the blood. Granny Smith apples are especially rich in malic acid, along with being one of the most antioxidant-rich apple varieties. All apples are great for your liver, however, but be sure to choose organic apples since they're one of the worst sources of pesticides in conventional form.

8. Garlic

Garlic is rich in allicin and selenium, two powerhouse nutrients for your liver. They act in cleansing and in nourishing the entire body, especially the blood. Selenium is a naturally detoxifying mineral and allicin helps ward off immune system invaders, which helps lighten the load on your liver. Garlic also activates enzymes in the liver which help with overall digestion and flushing out toxins. Use whole garlic cloves as the best option, instead of processed minced garlic or powder. Roasted Garlic, Miso and Green Soup would be an excellent liver-friendly recipe to enjoy.

9. Onions

Like garlic, onions are also rich in allicin that flush out the liver and the digestive tract. They're also packed with potassium, fiber, phytonutrients, and flavonoids that help your

body do everything from fight a nasty cold to repel toxic chemicals. Onions may stink odor-wise, but they're are a well-known detoxifying food to enjoy anyhow.

To avoid possible indigestion, avoid too many raw onions and give them a gentle cooking or serve them sautéed. ...delicious!

10. Leafy Greens

The nutritional all-star ingredients for just about every health issue are leafy greens. Like the rest of your body, your liver loves the leafies! Spinach, kale, chard, romaine, arugula, and collards are all some of the most nutrient dense leafy greens to enjoy. They're packed with chlorophyll to purify the blood, which assists in liver function and they help neutralize heavy metals, toxic chemicals, and even pesticides that burden the liver. Just be sure to buy organic once again, so you get the benefits.

Give your liver some plant-based lovin' with these foods and remember that sugar, alcohol, lack of exercise, multiple trips to the coffee maker, animal foods, and stuff out of a box (or bag) with a laundry list of ingredients are not your liver's friend.

Eat your way to a healthy liver; take care of your liver so it can take care of you!