

To cleanse or not to cleanse?

You have likely heard about them. Maybe you have even tried one yourself, but are juice cleanses needed and are they beneficial?

Cleanses or juicing diets are a short-term fix for what is often a long-term problem. Many try a cleanse diet to help lose weight. Whether the cleanse diet is purchased pre-made or made at home from fruits and vegetables, weight is often lost quickly during the diet as these diets are low in fat and calories. When fruits and vegetables are juiced they lose beneficial fiber and nutrients. A cleanse diet also lacks in protein, fat and minerals such as iron and calcium.

Ads may promote cleanses as a way to remove toxins from the body. In reality, our kidneys and liver work to filter toxins on a daily basis. People may feel better while cleansing because they likely are not eating all of the processed food they may have been eating pre-cleanse. After the cleanse most end up gaining the weight back; therefore, they are not beneficial long term.

Whether done long or short-term there have not been studies proving cleanses to be necessary. Cleanse products purchased online or in stores are not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and may have unknown possible side effects. Fruits and vegetables are helpful in losing weight when included as part of a balanced diet. Successful weight loss may take some time but the likelihood of keeping the weight off is greater by making lifestyle changes during the process. The best way to lose weight and to keep it off is by eating a balanced diet with whole foods and regular physical activity.

Cleanses may appeal to those who do not like eating fruits and vegetables. It is possible to sneak some fruits and vegetables in without cleansing. Try making a refreshing fruit and vegetable drink at home for a snack by blending up your favorite produce and adding a protein source such as milk, yogurt and/or peanut butter.

For more information on weight loss please contact the Minneapolis VA MOVE! Program at **612-629-7388**.