

SMART SENSE

LOOK AFTER YOUR LIVER

THE LIVER IS ONE OF THOSE ORGANS THAT WE DON'T NECESSARILY APPRECIATE OR REALISE THE IMPORTANCE OF. BUT READ ON, AND YOU MIGHT BE SURPRISED WHAT YOU LEARN.

Q "I am a group fitness instructor with Fitness First and I eat a vegetarian diet, low carb, high protein, lots of fresh fruit and vegetables and I do include low fat dairy and low fat cheeses. My husband is currently doing a raw food detox and he is being advised to delete dairy from his diet completely. I notice in several of your articles that the same advice is given. Can you tell me more, please?"

– Leisl

THIS IS A GREAT QUESTION LEISL. The body is always naturally detoxifying, it's the job of the liver, gall bladder and kidneys. The aim with any detox is to remove the more acidic foods that, over time, can cause increased toxicity and eat more alkaline foods, therefore, taking the load off the liver and letting it do its job more effectively. Although dairy is not bad for you, it still needs a more acidic environment to break it down.

Many people don't understand how important a healthy liver actually is for overall health. Faulty nutrition can result in inflammation of the digestive tract and/or dysbiosis, which is a disruption of healthy gut bacteria, leading to bacterial, fungal or parasite infection, intestinal permeability and allergy (email editor@fitnessfirst.com.au for copies of previously published articles on digestive health). As a result, the gut wall can become leaky, which results in more protein than normal being released into the bloodstream, causing an allergic reaction. And along with other toxins, this taxes the liver's ability to detoxify the body.

Unfortunately, once the liver's reserve is impaired, any dietary or environmental insult can retrigger

Liver health is absolutely critical for optimal health and wellbeing

NUTRITION | WEIGHT

inflammation and, incidentally, it is this type of digestive problem, which leads to liver overload, that commonly causes chronic fatigue syndrome.

The good news is that each of these factors can be tested by a nutrition consultant and corrected. Specific nutrients help to improve liver function. These include antioxidants, certain amino acids and phytochemicals found in natural, unadulterated foods. Brussels sprouts are a case in point. Naturally rich in the phytochemicals known as glucosinolates, Brussels sprouts gained their reputation as an anti-cancer food. Three servings a day have been reported to halve the risk of some cancers.

Symptoms of liver dysfunction include tiredness, aching muscles, loss of appetite, nausea, jaundice (turning yellow, including the whites of the eyes), diarrhoea, dark-coloured urine, abdominal discomfort, light-coloured stools, irritability, and itching and flu-like symptoms.

FOODS TO AVOID

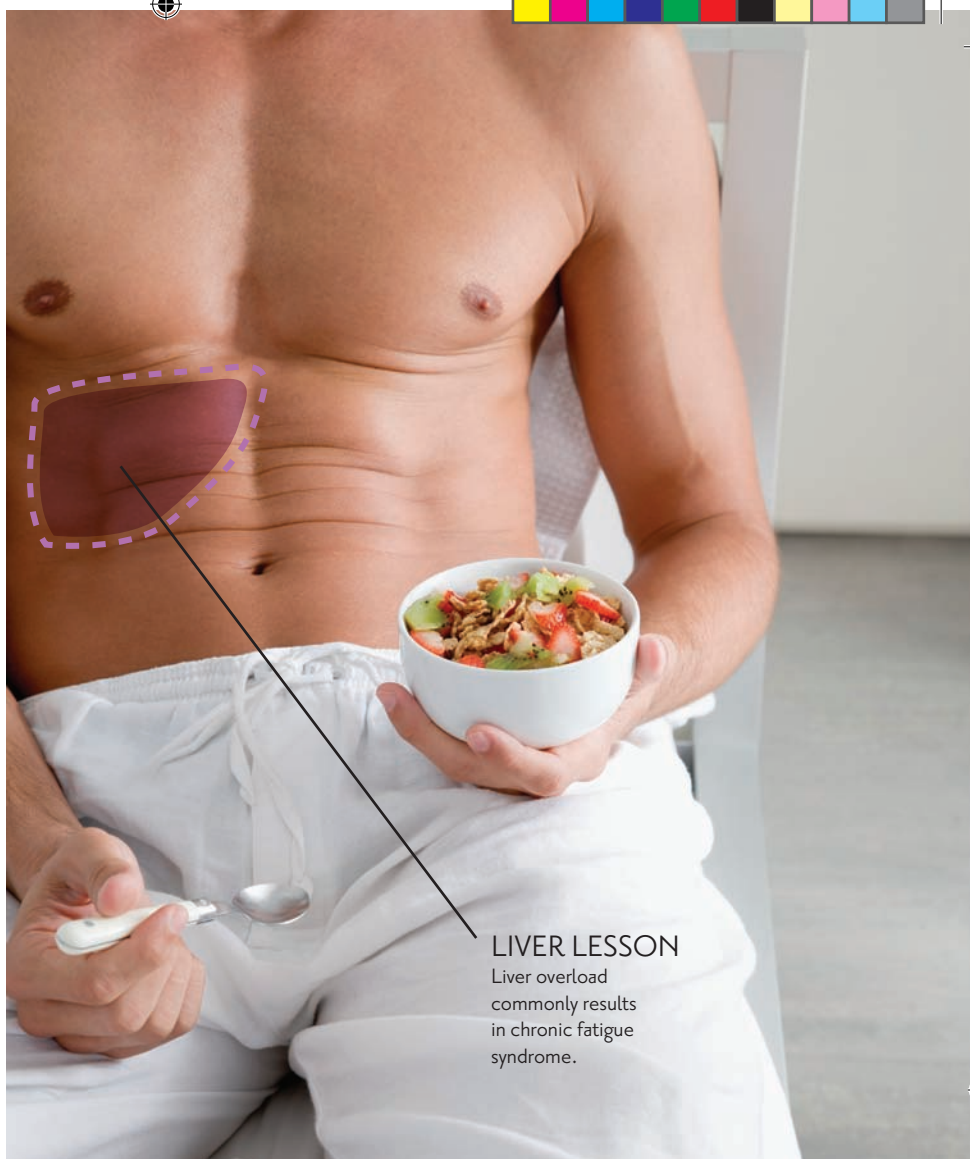
- Alcohol
- Dairy
- High saturated fats
- Red meat, yellow cheese and chicken with skin.
- Stimulants such as coffee, sugar and refined flour products.
- Foods containing preservatives, colouring or additives.

FOODS TO EAT

- Legumes are a rich source of sulphur, necessary for the creation of detoxifying and liver-protective enzymes.
- Seeds, nuts, avocados and oily fish (all in small doses)
- Dandelion root coffee is wonderful for the liver, and as you've kissed your morning cappuccino goodbye, you may as well start to enjoy its characteristically nutty flavour.
- Take the juice of half a lemon in hot water first thing in the morning.
- Good liver foods include pineapple, lemon, grapefruit, pear, grapes, artichoke, shiitake mushrooms, garlic, carrot, beetroot, cucumber, bitter lettuce and chicory.
- Fresh juices are good therapy. Drink one daily made from one or a few of the foods mentioned above. If your liver is sensitive, however, too much beetroot juice will cause nausea.
- Green tea contains the bioflavonoid catechin, which is an antioxidant and very healing for the liver. Drink three cups daily.
- Dairy alternatives such as quinoa milk, almond milk, rice milk, oat milk.

HERBS AND SUPPLEMENTS TO BOOST LIVER HEALTH

- Liver herbs include globe artichoke, St Mary's thistle, dandelion root, liquorice, turmeric, bupleurum, schizandra, astragalus, polyonum, phyllanthus and golden seal.



LIVER LESSON

Liver overload commonly results in chronic fatigue syndrome.

- The sulphur-containing amino acids methionine, cysteine and taurine help to make detoxifying enzymes in the liver such as glutathione. These enzymes are antioxidant, detoxify drugs and chemicals and protect liver cells. Vitamins B6, 9 and 12 are necessary co-factors in this process.
- Vitamin C reduces inflammation and helps fight infection and aid detoxification. Take 500mg to 2g, three times daily.
- Lecithin helps with fat digestion take one dessertspoon or three capsules each day.
- Vitamin B complex: take one tablet each morning.
- Herbal bitters in water before dinner each night
- Take the tissue salt nat. sulpha: two tables daily.

AUSTRALIAN BUSH FLOWER ESSENCES FOR OPTIMAL LIVER HEALTH

- Dagger Hakea
- Mountain devil
- Slender Rice Flower
- Sunshine Wattle

MIND BODY

The liver is the organ of anger. Are you able to express your anger? Ask yourself honestly, is there an issue or relationship that needs to be resolved? If so, do so!



There are many simple things you can do (or stop doing!) to ensure you protect your liver and achieve optimal health.

ZOE BINGLEY-PULLIN,

Zoe is a nutritionist and the founder of Nutritional Edge, a thriving nutritional consultancy business which helps companies and individuals embrace the benefits of food through education and understanding. She is an internationally trained chef (Le Cordon Bleu School, London), and an experienced speaker. Zoe can be contacted on 0417 048 789 or at www.nutritionaledge.com.au