

UNDERSTANDING THE HEALING CRISIS

“Letdowns can be caused by the dumping of
too much disease, dead cells and poisons too quickly.
You are healing too fast; your treatment is really working – too well.
You may feel worse, but you are not worse.”

-Leo Roy, M.D., N.D.

Some people are surprised to find that shortly after they change to a healthier diet, they often experience generally brief but unpleasant reactions such as headaches, pimples, nausea, flu-like symptoms or loss of energy.

When people give up things like meat and coffee and switch to raw vegetable salads and carrot juice – and then feel sick – it may be enough to make them wonder if this natural food is really good for them!

If this happens to you, don't be alarmed and don't turn back. You have just entered the first phase of your healing.

This unpleasant little episode is known as “The Healing Crisis,” “Detoxification” or a “Cleansing Reaction,” and it is fairly common. Dr Norman W. Walker refers to this as our body's way of ‘housecleaning’. Dr George Malkmus estimates that about 40 percent of the people who make a major dietary change to natural foods go through some form of healing crisis. About 60 percent of people who convert to a natural diet have no such reaction; about 30 percent will have a mild healing crisis; and about 10 percent will have a more severe reaction, he said.

The healing crisis can be a very discouraging setback to some people if they don't understand what is happening with their body. When we start eating a healthier diet, we expect to feel better, not worse. Some people are so discouraged that they are tempted to abandon their newly-improved diet and return to their old ways at the first sign of unpleasant symptoms. This is

unfortunate, because the healing crisis is a classic example of the darkest hour being right before the dawn. This temporary discomfort can be the first sign that our body's natural process of self-healing is kicking into high gear.

As our healing begins, we must remember that our body is dealing with toxins that are that are deep within our cells and vital organs. As our body strives to eliminate these deep-seated toxins, it is very easy to understand how we may feel nauseous or get a headache as these toxins – on their way out of our body – first get circulated a bit in our bloodstream. Or if these toxins are eliminated through the skin in the form of pimples or a skin rash, we should feel relieved to have these impurities exited at the surface level rather than remaining and accumulating deep in our body.

When the body has accumulated many years of toxic wastes and poisons, this has a degenerative effect, to one extent or another, on every cell and every vital organ in our body. The very first step in our healing process must be eliminating these toxic wastes from the cellular level of our body, and from our vital organs, as we begin to bring in the vital nutrients that our body needs to rebuild its immune system, its 100 trillion living cells and its organs. As we switch to a diet that brings in fresh, living, high-quality nutrients, our body will use these nutrients as building blocks to regenerate new living cells. Because our body now has this new high-quality building material to work with, it will start to discard the old, lower-quality material, including toxins that may have been

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slowly degenerating our vital organs for years.

So are we happy and relieved to know that these deep-seated toxic wastes are on the way out of our body? Or are we disappointed when these impurities circulate in our blood long enough to let us feel a headache or nausea? Or do we grimace when these poisons are eliminated through the skin in the form of pimples or a rash?

The main thing to remember is that regardless of how bad we dislike these pimples, nausea, fatigue or headaches, we should realize that it is better for our body to deal temporarily with these symptoms on the surface level rather than to continue holding these toxins deep within our cells and vital organs, where they will have a more gradual degenerative effect that could eventually culminate in a serious, life-threatening disease.

Now I realize that pimples, nausea, and headaches are difficult things to feel good about, but if we can comprehend the wisdom of our body's process of self-healing during the healing crisis, we really would appreciate these symptoms of minor discomfort.

Specific symptoms of the healing crisis will vary according to the type and quantity of toxins that need to be eliminated, the health of the organs involved in this elimination, and how abruptly the dietary transition is being made. Other possible symptoms of the healing crisis include diarrhea, constipation, frequent urination, nervousness, irritability, fevers, or pain in an area where we previously had a physical problem.

Diarrhea and cold-like symptoms are good examples of reactions you may think are bad, but are actually doing good things for your body. The cleansing aspect of fruit can help clean out old, impacted fecal matter from your intestinal walls and flush out this toxic fecal matter in the form of loose stools. This may seem uncomfortable or inconvenient, but it is very beneficial to your body. Another example of something good that may seem bad is a large discharge of mucous from your nasal passages. This may seem like a bad cold or a sinus attack, but a more accurate explanation is that the dietary change is allowing your body to eliminate excess toxins that have been built up in your mucous membranes.

Since these reactions are part of our body's healing process, experts in natural health recommend against taking pain-relievers or other drugs to mask these symptoms. If we want to learn how to eliminate the cause of our sickness, rather than just continuing to mask its symptoms, we will be willing to tolerate the temporary discomfort of a healing crisis.

But there are some things that we can do to minimize these symptoms. Dr George Malkmus recommends slowing down on the raw foods and plant life concentrates, and perhaps temporarily reducing the amount of the supplements we've added in – which will make your body's transition more gradual. Increased quantities of freshly extracted carrot juice is another means of speeding up the body's process of flushing out these toxins. Dr Malkmus notes the advantage of using fresh juice, rather than water, is that the juice also contains the vital nutrients to help regenerate our body's cells while it is flushing out the toxins. It is also good during the healing crisis to give your body plenty of rest, including your

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digestive system. This means eating less than normal so you are not overworking your digestive tract while your body is trying to eliminate toxins.

Dr. Leo Roy, M.D., N.D., advises, "If you are worried or confused, call the doctor who helped design your program. Anxiety can drastically slow down healing. Don't get discouraged. Don't quit. If you have not gone back to doing anything detrimental to your health, then you are not going back to being sick. . . Letdowns can be caused by the dumping of too much disease, dead cells and poisons too quickly. You are healing too fast; your treatment is really working – too well. You may feel worse, but you are not worse."

For most people, a healing crisis does not last more than two or three days. And when it is over, many people report feeling better than they have ever felt in their lives, and have described tremendous bursts of energy.

In more extreme cases, symptoms could last a week or so, but they rarely continue for more than 30 days. Sometimes a few days of healing crisis will be followed by feeling great, and then another healing crisis and then feeling better again. With this pattern, generally the extent of each healing crisis gets shorter and less severe, while the periods of feeling good get progressively better and last longer.

Another way of understanding the healing crisis is to remember that certain toxic substances such as cigarettes, coffee, tea, refined sugar, chocolate, soft drinks, alcohol, and prescription drugs can be addictive, and when we stop consuming any addictive substance, it is common to have

headaches or a 'let-down' feeling. Most long-term users (addicts) of nicotine or caffeine will feel terrible during this transitory period in which they are withdrawing from cigarettes or coffee. Keep in mind, this terrible feeling is only temporary. In the long run, you'll feel much better. (After all, how could quitting nicotine or caffeine be bad for you?)

Withdrawal from meat can also cause a 'let-down' feeling in some people, because the large amount of protein in meat has a stimulating effect on the body, even though this type and quantity of protein is unnecessary and not usable by our bodies. Again, experts in natural health recommend against taking any painkillers or stimulants to offset the symptoms of withdrawal from these addictive drugs or meat. Part of the withdrawal symptoms people may feel from giving up these addictive substances is caused by the cells of the body beginning to discard toxins such as caffeine, nicotine, chemical preservatives and excess bile and fat that clogs the arteries. The sooner a person can rid their body of these substances, the better off they will be; and any drugs they take to relieve the symptoms will just dump more toxins into their body.

If you consider your overall health to be more important than your brief, short-term discomfort, you won't let the healing crisis tempt you to turn back to your old diet. It may be necessary to remind yourself that, although the discomfort of a healing crisis is being felt as you quit consuming harmful substances, the root cause of this discomfort was putting these substances into your body in the first place.