

Macrobiotics America

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What to Expect after Beginning a Macrobiotic Dietary Practice and During a Self-Healing Process

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After a person begins a simple macrobiotic practice, including eating a macrobiotic diet and eliminating past dietary habits, a process of physical change begins to take place. Each person will have a unique response to this process.

Symptoms of Adjustment

When a person begins to eat a simple macrobiotic diet, the body begins to change and clear out. When food habits from the past are broken, and the food no longer eaten, the body will go through a changing process. For the majority of people this will take place without much noticeable discomfort or obvious symptoms. For others, the process of change can be more obvious. Just as a person who stops smoking cigarettes or drinking coffee experiences headaches, pain, cravings or other symptoms, so, too, when a person quits consuming sugar, saturated fats, concentrated animal protein, supplements, and other past foods, the body may experience withdrawal symptoms. Not everyone will experience dramatic symptoms or extreme cravings, but they can happen.

When given the opportunity, the human body will do its best to return to a healthy state of functioning, including a healthy state of cells, tissue and organs. As fats, pooled liquids, mucus and accumulated toxins begin to leave the body, the person may experience symptoms of what is commonly called "discharge" in macrobiotics. Discharge can also be called "illness of adjustment," as it is a sign that the body attempting to change and return to a healthier state. During this time, it can seem as though the person is experiencing symptoms of what would normally be seen as typical illness, but in fact there is a natural process of adjustment taking place. However, this can sometimes be uncomfortable and upsetting since we are used to viewing any signs of illness or physical discomfort as always signaling something negative..

As the body begins to clear out, adjust and return to its natural state, some of the following temporary symptoms might arise. They will not happen to everyone as most people will adjust and change through normal body channels without any noticeable symptoms. The following symptoms of adjustment are ones that can be experienced after starting a simple macrobiotic diet:

Muscle and Joint Aches
Pains
Fever
Skin rash
Pimples
Headache
Lack of appetite
Diarrhea
Headache
Cloudy urination

Mucus discharge from the eyes,
nose and lungs
Insomnia
Reduction of sexual drive
Emotional ups and downs
Frequent urination
Bad breath
Cessation of menstruation
Boils
Hunger

Body odor
Insomnia
Irritability
Cravings for former foods
Dreams about former foods
Other strange dreams
Mental fogginess
Lack of concentration
Release of kidney stones
Constipation

Pre-Existing Symptoms May Increase or New Symptoms May Appear

In some cases, after a person starts a macrobiotic diet, the symptoms that existed before starting macrobiotics may appear to increase. If there are pimples, the pimples may increase as the body is cleaning out. If there are emotional difficulties, these may seem to increase as the body changes. If there is a malignant tumor, the tumor may show signs of growth for a while as the body continues to use it as a collection area while clearing out past dietary excesses and toxins. For most people this is a temporary phase, but it can be scary. It can also be difficult to grasp that something good may actually be starting to happen if symptoms increase. Of course, all symptoms need to be brought to the attention of your doctor. Some symptoms can be helped with various macrobiotic home remedies. For this, please consult with an experienced macrobiotic counselor. Of course, many pre-existing symptoms can disappear as well. Numerous people have reported that their symptoms diminished or disappeared after beginning a basic macrobiotic practice.

Recovering from Past Medications, Supplement Toxicity, Improper Diet and/or Treatments

Often a person begins macrobiotics after many months, even years, of medication, surgery and/or chemotherapy. It is unrealistic to expect immediate recovery from the side effects of these treatments when one starts a macrobiotic practice, although a macrobiotic practice can certainly support the body in its process of healing from side effects. The side effects can continue for an unpredictable amount of time, and they can include weakness, fatigue, poor appetite and emotional ups and downs. A person who has had a long history of medications and/or chemotherapy will need to understand that much patience and time is needed for the body to recover. Also, long-time use of dietary supplements may have caused supplement toxicity, and this will require time to change. Individuals who have been following alternative or popular dietary fads that were inappropriate for their health, will need to be patient as their digestive and nervous systems restore themselves over time. A steady macrobiotic practice combined with a strong will for recovery is essential.

Current Medications, Supplements and Treatments

A person who is currently on medication or receiving medical treatment needs to communicate with their physician about their continued use. Often, a person on certain medications, such as blood pressure medication, has been able to reduce the amount of medicine once he or she has been on a steady macrobiotic healing practice, after consultation with and approval from their physician. Current use of supplements may be necessary for some and totally unnecessary for others. Over-supplementation might interfere with a self-healing macrobiotic process. Consult with an experienced macrobiotic counselor for specifics.

Blood Quality Changes

Each time we eat a macrobiotic meal, our blood quality is supported. However, the blood doesn't change overnight. Though we may have stopped eating the poor quality food of the past and recently began a macrobiotic diet, the blood changes over time, not overnight. So, the residual effects of past eating remain with us for awhile because our blood and all body cells which existed before we started macrobiotics, and which were created by our past eating, are still with us for awhile. However, they are changing and being replaced day by day by healthier blood and body cells being created by our macrobiotic eating.

The red blood cell lives for about 120 days, and all body cells are completely transformed over a 7-year period. Change and healing is a process that cannot be rushed, even though

we would like for it to progress quickly. Coming from a modern hurry-up culture that believes in the illusion of the quick fix of symptoms, it is sometimes a challenge to have patience with a natural healing process. A steady macrobiotic practice of daily eating and good chewing is essential for creating and maintaining healthy blood quality.

Weight Elimination

In the first weeks and months after beginning a macrobiotic practice it is normal and expected that a person will eliminate weight. For some this will be seen as a welcome occurrence, while for others it may cause worry, since they may have been advised by family, friends and others, that losing weight will be a bad thing. Within the first 6 months, a person's weight usually stabilizes, though on macrobiotics they will never be as weighty as before. Macrobiotics views the weight reduction as a necessary part of a healing process. More important factors, from a macrobiotic view, are the person's appetite, functions of elimination, energy level and personal attitude.

Feeling Hungry

In the first few days and weeks of beginning a macrobiotic practice, some people feel very hungry soon after eating a meal. This can be a normal sign of the body adjusting to the change in diet, or it can be a sign that the macrobiotic meals are not as complete as they could be. By consulting with a macrobiotic counselor or cooking teacher, it is possible to improve meal variety and reduce the hunger. Mostly, though, extreme feelings of hunger will fade over time as the body adjusts to the new way of eating.

What You Are NOT Eating Is Important, Too

When a person begins a macrobiotic practice, it is not only what they ARE eating but also what they are NOT eating that's important. Macrobiotics generally recommends the avoidance of certain foods. In a macrobiotic consultation it may be recommended that the person avoid certain specific foods for a variety of health reasons. By stopping the eating of certain foods, we contribute to the on-going re-establishment of our health and well being. Fifty percent of a macrobiotic dietary practice is what you DO it, the other fifty percent is what you DON'T eat. Both are equally important.

Healing Outside to Inside / Present to Past

The body's healing moves from the outside to the inside. So, after starting a macrobiotic healing process, you or your friends may notice that your skin is looking better even though diabetes or a more serious internal health condition is still present. Or you may notice that the functions of elimination are becoming more regular. These are considered more "surface" conditions and they tend to change quicker than deeper health conditions within the body that have developed over a longer period of time.

The natural healing process is a gradual one. It moves from the external to the internal over time. We also heal from the present to the past. In other words, what you eat today, in the present, must be changed first before the healing of problems due to past diet can take place. If we keep eating in the present in the same way that we did in the past, the body will not be able to heal from past way of eating.

Patience

Having grown up in a hurry-up world that has a short attention span, we have to reeducate ourselves to understand a natural healing process. Real patience is required when practicing macrobiotic self-healing skills.