Hi, there! Let’s talk about the hidden toxins that can be sabotaging your weight loss efforts. Are there secret things lurking in your kitchen that are trying to make you fat? That’s a pretty wild thought, but we’re learning there’s a whole new content of chemicals called obesogens. Independent of how much food we eat, these chemicals can trigger the body to go into a storage mode, which can trigger weight gain. We’ll talk about how to know what the traps are, how to work around them, and how to keep them from building up in your body, so nothing is blocking your efforts.

The last time we talked, we discussed the fiber-fructose-freedom concept. We discussed maximizing your fiber, reducing your fructose and gaining freedom from cravings. (Fiber is going to come into play in this topic as well.) Being free from cravings makes it easier to be intentional about the foods that serve you the most. This freedom helps you move toward effortless weight loss, without struggle or strain. What a great thing!

When your body is losing weight easily and is freer of toxins, one big, added benefit is your brain works better. Our brains have a unique environment. There is a blood-brain barrier, which is a filter that keeps things from coming into your brain from your bloodstream. There are a whole lot of things floating in your blood that are fine but could hurt you if they got into your brain. Although the filter keeps some things out, there are many toxins we’re now exposed to that go right through that filter. At that point, the filter actually works against us, as it prevents many things that come into the brain from getting out. They stay stuck inside your brain, so the amount of toxins inside the brain can be higher than the amounts in the rest of your body. There is a flipside to this. As the load of toxins coming into the body gets lower, your brain works better. We would all totally welcome that!

Another big benefit is that our bodies move away from storage and towards burning. We become more able to generate fuel out of our fat and out of our food. There’s two cool things about that. First, when we can draw from our fat stores to better supply our
needs, we can lose weight easier, reduce inches, and get the shape we want. That’s great! Second, we’re making that fat we’re burning into fuel, which is powering our brains, our muscles and fueling our dreams. Our lives become better because we’re now more energetic. We’re better able to put fuel where we want it, instead of it sitting around unburned and unmet.

There’s a person I’ve known for many years. I want to tell you a story about her mother, who actually, was kind of a big deal back in World War II. This woman struggled with both weight and arthritis for many, many years. We realized the big cause of her struggles was the build-up of lead in her body. She worked for a company delivering packages, where she was exposed to lead from the vehicles’ exhaust fumes. When we finally identified high amounts of lead, and helped her detoxify, she spontaneously began losing weight. This is a good example of how toxins are stored in our fat, making the fat more resistant and weight loss more difficult.

Why does all this happen? There’s certain things our liver and kidneys cannot process. Our bodies have so many strategies to protect us and help us out of difficult situations. To explain, what happens if you have a lot of dirt on your floor, have guests coming over and not enough time to clean it properly? You have a big rug on the floor, so what do you do with the dirt? You sweep it under the rug, right? You can’t see it. It’s still there, but at least it is hidden. That’s what our bodies do, too. The “under the rug” in our bodies is in our visceral fat. Literally, the fat takes on more toxins because they are less harmful when stored there. Our bodies do that intentionally to protect us. The consequence, though, is we may need more fat to store more toxins. The other consequence is our bodies do not want to break down fat when it’s carrying a lot of toxins. The body senses it will be injurious to us. However, this can all change when the toxins come out. The woman I referred to earlier not only experienced weight loss, but also had a big drop in joint pain. This is because our connective tissues are also places where a lot of toxins get stuck. So, when we’re moving things through our bodies more effectively and freely, we have more mobility, less stiffness, and fewer aches and pains.

Now that we’ve discussed two big benefits from carrying a lower amount of environmental toxins, let’s dispel some myths about detoxing.
Detox Myths

**Myth #1:** Detoxing is really hard, and it has to make you miserable. We have this idea that cleansing involves diarrhea, skin eruptions and all this terrible stuff. That is not a detox; that’s retox. That’s just your body recirculating wastes and having a hard time getting anything out, so it’s not productive. When a detox goes well, nothing painful or dramatic happens.

**Myth #2:** You detox once a year, and you’re done with it. While it’s smart to have strategies to take your load down by a bunch, your main objective is to have ongoing strategies. I call this pretox. Pretox keeps the junk from getting in your body in the first place. We are all exposed on a daily basis. (Quite literally, there are high amounts of DDT and other compounds in the Antarctic ice half a mile deep.) We cannot escape all of it, but we can escape the worst of it by having strategies to keep toxins from building up in our bodies.

**Myth #3:** Only some people detox because they have weird exposure at work, but most everyone does not. This is just not the case. There’s an environmental medicine expert I’ve studied under who used to have long, elaborate questionnaires, seeing who’d be at risk for carrying environmental toxins. Do you want to know what his questionnaire looks like now? It’s pretty short: “Do you have a pulse, and are you breathing?” Answer ‘yes’ to one or more of those questions, and you’re at risk for carrying toxins in your body.

I’ve been a big fan of journalist, Bill Moyers, for years. He wrote an exposé, called “Trade Secrets”. This was specifically about the plastic industry and plastic manufacturing. He had testing done on himself and others for over 300 different environmental chemicals. He found every adult screened for things like this had high levels of at least 290. Even though he had no unexpected exposure, he had the same high levels. So, we’re all swimming in this soup. Detoxing is not a once-a-year thing, and it doesn’t have to make you feel sick. It can be totally effective and totally easy.

Let’s talk about some basic steps we can all take.

**Step #1:** The first step is pretox. Pretox means just keeping stuff out. It’s minimizing the toxic burden coming into your body. There are several sources of these toxins, with our biggest exposure coming from the indoor air of our homes. This is easy to remedy by using high quality, hepa filters, especially in the bedroom. Also, make sure the central air return filters in your home are thick, pleated filters you cannot see through. Make sure they’re changed on schedule. This will lower the toxic burden a ton.
Another big source of indoor toxins is pesticide sprays. This is a tough one. I live in the Sonoran Desert where we have scorpions. They’re pretty compelling; it actually hurts when you get stung. It’s hard to sacrifice on spraying when you have scorpions, but we’ve managed pretty well to avoid it. Outdoor spraying is probably not a big factor. Studies have shown there is not a large amount of toxins coming into the home with outdoor spraying. However, indoor spraying is very different. There’s clear evidence that spraying for pesticides inside the home raises risks for leukemia and lymphomas. Many of the compounds used in the sprays are categorized as obesogens (things that can cause weight gain despite your efforts). If you do have pests - if you have scorpions, roaches, ants or other bugs - there are nontoxic options available to treat inside the home. Boric acid is a great one. It’s a nontoxic powder you can put in areas where pests could enter the home or where they’ve been spotted. Pests are drawn to consume it. It’s very toxic to them, but very harmless for us. So, take a look at nontoxic strategies to manage the pests inside your house.

The other big source of indoor air pollution is shoes. Make a habit of taking shoes off before you come into the home. Have a rack outdoors, have a little sign, and have some slippers for guests. This lowers the toxic burden tremendously, and there is no harm in doing it.

Another source to consider is dry-cleaning. It’s very simple. When you pick up your dry-cleaning, take it out of the plastic right away. Let it sit outdoors for a day, ideally in the sunlight. This simple step off-gases the solvents, so they’re not entering the air in your home or your bodies.

We also think about the sources of contaminants we’re putting inside our bodies. These come through our water supply and our food. You want purified water available in your home and lots of it. Water flushes and

“The more you dilute any waste inside your body, the less harmful it is.”
dilutes wastes. I heard a quote that “the solution for pollution is dilution” (I love goofy sayings like that.) The more you dilute any waste inside your body, the less harmful it is. Again, you want to dilute it with purified water. The easiest way to have purified water is with a reverse osmosis system in your home. You don’t want to take a trip to the store whenever you need water, nor get your water in plastic. Shoot for at least 3-4 quarts of water per day. For most adults, that’s a good amount to keep things flushing out and reduce the waste coming in.

Step #2: The second step is retox. What is retox? A lot of toxins that enter our bodies, stay in our bodies and do not leave. Many of them end up going to our colon where they could exit in our stool, but instead, reabsorb right back into our system. There’s a fancy name for that, called enterohepatic recirculation. “Entero” refers to the intestinal tract; “hepatic” refers to the liver. Recirculation means the toxins come right back in. I call this process the retox process.

How do you avoid retox? There are several easy things you can do. First, the more you have a fiber rich diet (remember, we spoke before of the fiber-fructose targets), the less you’re going to retox and the more you will keep things trapped in your stool.

Second, lignans are very powerful. There are many plants high in lignans. The very densest source of lignans is ground flax seed. If you’re aiming to help your body detox better and prevent this retox process, add two tablespoons of ground flaxseed to your smoothie or any type of cooked dish. It’s tasty stuff and very effective at binding up those wastes and trapping them.

Third, another great source of help is green foods. Spinach, kale, and collards are really good at lowering the whole retox process.

“Consuming just the basic foods and water for a month is hugely beneficial and so easy.”

Step #3: The third step is an active detox. I’ll be encouraging a four-week process for you. I’ll give you more information later on how to do this really easily, using a detox-in-a-box. Detoxing helps to lower the burden, not only because you strategically augment all your body’s ways of eliminating toxins, but you also radically lower your toxic intake. Think about your detox as a little mine cart. Each day,
you fill up your cart with toxins and take them out of your body. There are also ways to help that cart go faster, lowering the burden more quickly. This isn’t going to take care of the toxic burden for the rest of your life, but it’s smart to really get a jumpstart on that.

One model of detox is simply to have a very low ingredient list diet for a period of four weeks. A great way to do that is to build your list only around the basic, unprocessed foods: vegetables, lean proteins, intact whole grains, nuts and seeds, beans and legumes and a couple strategic fruits. Avoid all the flavorings, preservatives, chemical additives and unnecessary beverages. Consuming just the basic foods and water for a month is hugely beneficial and so easy. Again, I’ll give you more tips later on how to use a detox-in-a-box to make it even easier.

What are the benefits of detox? Weight loss gets easier and so does maintaining your weight. Once your burden of chemicals is lower, your body now has less chemicals to deal with. That means your little mine cart isn’t busy working on removing the backlog of toxins. The cart is pretty much empty, so whatever comes in, you can get out. As in many other circumstances, it’s way easier to stay healthy than it is to get healthy. So once you get there, it’s really easy to stay there. That’s true for all the mental benefits, and it’s also true for the weight loss benefits. So, when you get your body cleaned out and your metabolism revved up, you’re burning fuel better and you’re more energized. It’s going to stay that way. It’s going to be easier to keep it that way. How cool is that?

So, let’s recap the framework we’ve laid out: pretox, retox and detox. In regard to pretox, always be vigilant, asking yourself how the chemicals are coming into your body. How can you avoid them?

“If that’s not enough, there’s also a side benefit of your cancer risk a plummeting.”
How can you reduce them? Consider your cleaning compounds, any pesticide sprays, solvents, toxins in your food, your water and your air. Work on minimizing your burden, and realize this pretox is an ongoing process.

As far as retox, what can you do to make your intestinal tract do as good a job as possible, getting toxins all the way out and not reabsorbing them? The main strategies are lots of fiber, lots of green foods and ground flax.

Consider a good, four-week block of detox. I encourage you to do it on a yearly basis, especially when you’re just starting the process of really transforming your health. It’s so powerful. The four-week process can be as simple as clean foods, lots of water and plenty of rest. It doesn’t take much more complexity than that.

The benefits of detoxing are better mental energy, better metabolism and easier weight loss. If that’s not enough, there’s also a side benefit of your cancer risk plummeting.

In Good Health!