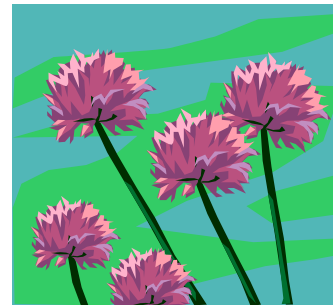


# *Women's Nutrition Matters* *Monthly*

## **Monthly Feature: Spring Cleaning!**

By Diane L Lassen, RN, HHC

**I**t is a cool 25 degrees outside this morning, but I am confident that spring is really here. Looking out of my office window, I see the tulips and daffodils poking through the mulch and robins flit about the downed leaves. The air is clean and crisp but the sun is bright and warm—the perfect weather for a morning hike. In fact, Bolo and I just returned from an hour's hike where I saw still more evidence of spring: the wild garlic mustard and onion grasses are sprouting now, and chickweed will soon follow suit.



After a long, cold winter, many of us are carrying around a few extra pounds, what with the short days, long nights and well-stocked refrigerators for foraging! Many of us, too, have allowed the wintertime to discourage us from exercising as much, just as the warm sun of summer beckons to us to come and play outside. But winter is but a memory and spring has sprung, so it is time to get down to business and start our body's spring cleaning!

With the change in seasons comes a change in eating, as we replace the heavy nuts and oils, meats and comforting casseroles of winter with the fresh greens, sprouts and berries of spring. In Ayurvedic and Native American cultures, spring is a time for cleansing the body of excess fat and mucus. For us, this means taking advantage of the fat-burning properties of bitter greens and herbs, fat-free vegetables, berries and no or low gluten grains such as barley, buckwheat and corn. Fill your plate with arugula, young mustard greens, collards and kale. Steam up the season's first asparagus which is particularly cleansing to the bladder. The still cool evenings are perfect for a bowl of cooked barley or polenta while sitting by the fire. All these foods move us physiologically from storing fat to mobilizing it for fuel.

Spring is also the time for seeds to sprout and make their presence known as they poke up through the warming soil. Similarly, spring is the perfect time to add fresh sprouts to

the diet—sprouted seeds and grains are nutrient-dense and protein rich and can be added to salads, stir-fries and blender drinks. They are perfect for fortifying our energy levels as we awaken our bodies with increasing amounts of exercise and yard work! Interested in sprouting? Check out the [Sprout People](#). Sprouting seeds at home is easy and rewarding and something I highly recommend.

Now is also the time to add detoxifying teas such as dandelion root and leaf, burdock or chicory root to our routine. These herbs are bitter and fat-burning in nature, perfect additions to the spring time regimen. Energetically dispersing and high in minerals, these roots help to clear mucus from the body and help to prevent the body from overreacting to spring's allergens. By taking advantage of all of these plants we can maximize our spring cleaning and jumpstart our body's fat-burning capabilities. Spring is the time for weight loss!

Another vital part of our spring cleaning concerns the skin, our largest detoxifying organ. Many of you know that I am an advocate of dry skin brushing, and spring is the perfect time to begin! Skin brushing mechanically invigorates the skin, removes the dead layer of cells that has accumulated all winter, and stimulates lymph flow when the strokes move toward the heart. Using a natural bristle skin brush, brush your body from fingers to toes until you have a light pink glow, avoiding any areas of inflammation or injury. Follow this with a warm shower and natural moisturizer or oil. Daily skin brushing will assist in the detox process and give you beautiful skin for summer, too! Before I leave the subject of lymphatic drainage, I want to mention that it is this drainage system that moves throughout our bodies collecting and removing all things unnecessary- toxins, wastes, etc. Our lymph flow increases through exercise and skin brushing and we need to take advantage of them both. While I am a big walking fan (I do it every day!) the very best way to improve your lymphatic drainage is through rebounding--- bouncing on a mini trampoline. How much fun is that!

I hope that I have given you reasons to consider a more cleansing diet and lifestyle for this spring. The benefits are obvious- weight loss, clearer skin, clearer mind, increased energy. If you are interested in learning more about cleansing for spring, please contact me or join our group, or I will start up another group for you and your friends. Just email me at [herbagem@gmail.com](mailto:herbagem@gmail.com).

## Cleansing recipe ideas for spring:

### Spring Salad with citrus dressing:

The obvious choice for spring cleaning! Start with a large bowl. Add lots of spring greens, and fresh herbs like chopped parsley, cilantro or dill. If you are a forager like me, now is the time to pick some wild greens like chickweed and garlic mustard. Add arugula for its bitterness or young mustard greens. Top with fresh sprouts.

For the dressing: combine ¼ cup each of grapefruit, lemon and orange juice in a pan and simmer to reduce to ¼ cup. Pour into a bowl to cool briefly. Add 1T Dijon mustard, ¼ cup of Champaign vinegar, and a minced shallot. Whisk them together and let them sit for 5 minutes before finally whisking in ½ cup of your best extra-virgin olive oil. Season with sea salt and fresh pepper.

Dressing will keep for 1-2 weeks. Use sparingly and toss well!

### Cleansing juices:

Spring tonic: a handful of parsley, 4 carrots, 1 garlic clove and 2 stalks of celery

Cherie's Cleansing Cocktail: ¼" slice of ginger root, 1 beet, ½ apple, 4 carrots

### Cleansing smoothies:

Diane's tropical vacation: Vitamix a large handful of parsley or baby spinach, 2 cups of pineapple, ¼ cup dried, unsweetened coconut, and 1 ripe banana. Add ice/water and blend!

Diane's berry boost: Vitamix 1 large handful of kale (minus the thick stems) or spinach, 1 cup frozen blueberries, a large chunk of Goya frozen blackberry puree (found in the freezer case at Shoprite) and 1 banana. Add ice/water and blend!

## Di's Monthly Message

While we are busy trying to clean up our bodies, we also must consider our earth and its needs. Earth Day is later this month, and we should all be mindful of our daily impact on the planet this month--- and always! Here are a few tips to get you thinking:

- Use less disposable items like paper cups and throwaway bags in favor of real dishes and glasses and earth-friendly cloth satchels.
- Bring your own "statement" mug to the coffee shop and ask them to fill 'er up for you and nix the Styrofoam or paper cups.
- Get in the habit of using a stainless steel water bottle instead of plastic disposables. They come in lots of different colors and sizes and can be found nearly everywhere.
- Wash clothes only when there is a full load, and consider using a clothes line in place of the dryer. Your clothes will feel and smell so fresh and towels get so crisp!
- While you are out doing your daily walk with your dog or child, get in the habit of bringing along a small garbage bag and pick up a bottle or can that you might pass along the way and dispose of it properly.

### Check out these Web sites:

- [www.sproutpeople.com](http://www.sproutpeople.com)
- [www.lifespa.com](http://www.lifespa.com)
- [www.canningpantry.com](http://www.canningpantry.com)

## News and Upcoming Events

- Soon to come—[Good Clean Love](#) products to help you reconnect with your partner!
- Counseling sessions---openings on Fridays—sign up now!  
[www.womensnutritionmatters.com](http://www.womensnutritionmatters.com)
- Need good vitamin supplements? Talk to me about [Metagenics!](#) Nutraceuticals for your every health need!
- Interested in hosting a healthy eating workshop? Call me! 908-377-0773 for availability, rates and possible topics!

## The Last Word ...

It is always a pleasure to bring good health news to you each month. It seems that so much of our news these days is bad news: depressed economy, high unemployment, crooked politicians, scheming CEOs. Why not focus instead on creating health this season for yourself and for your loved ones. It would be a privilege to assist you in reaching your health goals. As always, you can reach me at my site, [www.womensnutritionmatters.com](http://www.womensnutritionmatters.com) or by phone at 908-377-0773. Please pass this newsletter along to friends and coworkers so that they, too, may find reason to be hopeful this season. Print it out, and pass it on. I'd welcome the opportunity to reach out to more people like you.

Many blessings,  
Diane



