Why Your Kidney Cleanse Might Be Destroying Your Kidneys Transcript

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Kidney Health and Potassium Risks

When your kidneys aren't working properly, they can't efficiently remove excess potassium. And fruits and vegetables, especially the ones popular in cleansers, are extremely high in potassium.

When you juice them, you concentrate that potassium into a form that gets absorbed quickly. One large glass of green juice can contain as much potassium as several servings of vegetables.

Drink multiple glasses a day and you are overwhelming your kidneys that are already struggling. I'm Dr. Vismair Phan, a physician on a mission to help you break free from symptom management and step into a life of thriving health.

Together, we will uncover simple, powerful ways to prevent disease, restore energy and take control of your health naturally.

A Patient's Mysterious Kidney Decline

If you're ready to stop managing illness and start building vitality, you are in the right place. Your prescription for vitality starts now. Something happened in my clinic a few months ago that I haven't been able to shake.

A woman in her early 50s, let's call her the reason I'm talking to you today, came in for what she thought would be a routine follow-up. Her labs had come back and something was wrong.

Her kidney function had dropped significantly over the past year. Not a little, a lot. She was confused, scared, and honestly, so was I. Because on paper, she was doing everything right, eating well, Exercising, no major health conditions, no family history of kidney disease.

She'd even been taking a supplement specifically designed to support her kidneys. A natural kidney cleanse. She'd found online. The bottle promised to flush toxins and restore kidney health.

She'd been taking it faithfully for 8 months. believing she was giving her body exactly what it needed. And that's when I started pulling on a thread that led me somewhere I didn't expect.

What if the very thing she thought was protecting her kidneys was the thing destroying them? Stay with me here because what I discovered while investigating her case and dozens of cases like it changed how I think about an entire industry that's worth billions of dollars and an industry built on a word that most of us trust blindly.

Why the Detox Industry Is Misleading

Let's start with what most people believe. The detox narrative is everywhere. Walk into any health food store, scroll through social media and you'll see products promising to cleanse your kidneys, flush out toxins, purify your system naturally.

The packaging is clean, wholesome, leaves and herbs, the word natural stamped across the label. It feels healthy. It feels proactive. It feels like you are doing something good for your body.

And here's the thing, I understand the appeal deeply. My own health journey taught me the power of addressing root causes of using natural nutrition and lifestyle to support healing.

So I'm not coming from this from a place of skepticism about natural approaches. I'm coming at this because I've seen what happens when natural becomes a marketing term rather than a measure of safety.

But here's where it gets interesting. There is a fundamental misunderstanding at the heart of the detox industry, one that most people never question.

Your body doesn't need to be detoxed in the way these products clean. You already have a sophisticated, highly efficient detoxification system working around the clock.

Your liver processes nutrients and breaks down harmful substances. Your kidneys filter approximately 200 quarts of blood every single day, removing waste and excess substances through urine.

These organs are remarkably good at what they do. What if I told you that adding random supplements to this system doesn't help it work better? It actually creates more work.

Your kidneys now have to filter out whatever you have added. Your liver has to process it. You are not supporting this system. You are burdening it. This led me to ask a different question.

If these products don't help and might actually harm, why are they everywhere? How did we get here? That's when I discovered something that genuinely shocked me.

Supplement Regulation and Hidden Ingredients

The supplement industry in the United States operates in a regulatory grey zone that most people don't understand. When you see a detox product on store shelves, you probably assume someone has tested it.

The FDA? Maybe some government agency ensuring it's safe before it reaches you? A recent survey found that about half of American adults believe exactly that the FDA reviews and approves supplements before they can be sold.

But that's not how it works. Not even close. Under the Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act of 1994, supplements are classified as food products, not drugs.

What this means in practice is that manufacturers don't have to prove their products are safe or effective before selling them. They don't have to disclose all their ingredients.

They don't even have to notify the FDA that their product exists. Between 1994 and now, the number of supplement products has exploded from 4,000 to over 80,000. That's an industry growing largely unchecked.

So I went back to my patient's case. The woman whose kidney function had mysteriously declined. We looked at the ingredient list on her supplement. really looked at it.

Some herbs I recognized, some I didn't. After digging into the medical literature, we discovered that one of the herbs had been linked to kidney damage and published research.

But there was no warning on the label. Nothing. Just promises of better health. She thought she was healing herself. She was slowly harming herself. And she had no way of knowing it.

This is where the pieces started coming together for me. Because her case wasn't isolated, research has shown that at least 1 in 12 American adults take botanical supplements that are known to cause kidney damage.

One study looking at emergency department visits found that supplements were responsible for about 23,000 annual visits with over 2,000 resulting in hospitalization.

But the story that really haunts me, the one that made me realize how deep this problem goes, happened in Belgium in 1990s. A group of researchers discovered something alarming at a weight loss clinic.

Herbal Supplements Causing Kidney Damage

Over 100 women had developed a rapidly progressing kidney failure after taking supplements containing a plant called Aristolochia. These plants had been used in traditional medicine for centuries, Ayurvedic medicine, Chinese medicine, European herbal traditions.

For thousands of years, people used them without recognizing their toxicity. Here's what's chilling. The damage was painless. These women felt fine while their kidneys were being destroyed.

They didn't connect the supplement to their kidney failure until years later, when many already needed dialysis or transplants. Several went on to develop cancer of the urinary tract.

natural, traditional, used for centuries, and silently devastating. This case led to bans in many countries, but you can still find that ingredient in some traditional remedies sold online and even in US.

That's how inadequate our regulation is. But here's something else the research reveals. Something both simpler and more troubling than I expected. Many supplements don't even contain what their labels say.

A study published in JAMA found that more than 700 dietary supplements sold between 2007 to 2016 contained pharmaceutical ingredients that were never disclosed.

Things like Viagra or anabolic steroids hidden in natural products. Other supplements are contaminated with heavy metals. pesticides or toxins. Some contain none of the active ingredients they claim to have.

The dose is very widely between batches because there is no standardization requirement. For people with existing kidney concerns, this is especially dangerous.

Your kidneys are already working harder than they should be. When function is compromised, substances that might pass through healthy kidneys without issue can build up to toxic levels.

But I haven't even told you about the other trend that's been sending people to my clinic, one that seems even healthier than supplements.

Juice Cleanses and Dangerous Potassium

One case in particular has stayed with me. A man in his 60s with kidney disease came to me wanting to improve his function naturally. He'd done his research, decided to try a juice cleanse.

His logic made sense. Flood the body with nutrients from fresh fruits and vegetables, kale, spinach, carrots, beets, orange, bananas. All things we typically think of as healthy.

Seven days in, he started feeling tired and weak. His family noticed he seemed confused, his heartbeat irregular. They brought him to the emergency room.

His potassium was 8. Now to put that in perspective, normal potassium is between 3.5 and 5. Anything above 6 is dangerous. And at 8, potassium can cause your heart to stop.

The ER team had to do urgent dialysis because he had chronic kidney failure requiring long-term dialysis, but because his healthy juice cleanse had created an acute, life-threatening emergency.

What happened? When your kidneys aren't working properly, they can't efficiently remove excess potassium. And fruits and vegetables, especially the ones popular in cleansers, are extremely high in potassium.

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drink multiple glasses a day and you are overwhelming your kidneys that are already struggling. The tragic irony is

that this man was trying to help. He thought he was doing something natural and healing.

And in someone with perfectly healthy kidneys, that cleanse might have been fine. But for him, it killed him. What if natural isn't the same as safe? What if traditional doesn't guarantee that something won't harm you when taken in concentrated form or combined with other substances or used by someone whose body processes things differently?

This is what I keep coming back to. So where does this leave us? Not in fear. I don't want you to walk away from this feeling anxious about every choice you make.

But with clarity, with discernment, here's what actually supports kidney health. Based on what the evidence consistently shows, stay hydrated with plain water.

Your kidneys need fluid to function well.

What Actually Supports Kidney Health

Eat a balanced diet rich in whole foods, fruits, vegetables, grains, lean proteins, plant-based protein. and have them as whole foods, not concentrated juices, especially if you have kidney concerns.

If you have high blood pressure or diabetes, those are the leading causes of kidney disease. So managing them matters enormously. Don't smoke, limit alcohol, move your body regularly, sleep well.

These aren't exciting recommendations. They are not novel or marketable, but they are what your kidneys actually respond to. And if your kidney function is declining, that's not something a supplement or a cleanse will fix.

That requires deeper look at the root causes. What's actually driving the decline? Is it inflammation? Is it autoimmune activity? Is it chronic hidden infections?

Is it environmental factors? The answers are different for everyone, which is why personalization matters so much. What I want you to take from today is this.

Your kidneys are remarkable organs that don't need detoxing. What they need is support through choices that are truly aligned with how your body works, not products designed to sell a promise.

Natural isn't always safe. Expensive doesn't mean effective and your health is too important to gamble on marketing. If you're taking supplements right now or considering a cleanse, the most important thing you can do is bring that information to your physician who can look at your specific situation, your labs, your history, your unique picture.

Because what's harmless for one person can be dangerous for another. There's something else I'm still investigating, a thread I can't quite let go of.

The connection between what we put into our bodies and the slow, silent ways our organs can be affected over years, even decades. The gap between what we are told is healthy and what actually happens inside us.

It's a conversation I think we are only beginning to have. If this episode raised questions about your own health or if you want a more personalized approach that looks at what really goes on with your kidneys, we offer consultations at our kidney institute.

You can learn more at DrBisma.com. your body has wisdom, it has the capacity to heal when given the right support.

Closing Thoughts and Consultation Invitation

The question is whether we are listening to what it actually needs or just to what we are being sold. Thanks for tuning into the Wellness Focus with Dr.

Bishma, where we are rewriting the rules of health and giving you the tools to thrive. If this episode spoke to you, please subscribe and share it with someone who's ready to take control of developing.

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It starts with you. See you next time.