

LIVE WITH

Dr. Elson Haas

Bestselling author, pioneering
doctor and nutritional detox expert

BY MIKE ADAMS

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Live with Dr. Elson Haas

Bestselling author, pioneering doctor and nutritional detox expert

Mike: A lot of people are familiar with detox, but some are not, and from a nutritional standpoint, they certainly may not be familiar with what it involves. What type of detox do you focus on?

Dr. Haas: Well, detoxification involves getting rid of things from the body as well as stopping toxins and irritants in the body, those things that our body does not handle well or that cause damage, inflammation, irritation or over-stimulation in the case of caffeine or over-sedation in the case of alcohol. Now, when people think of detox, they think of drug addicts who need to go into a detox center. However, there are many others who could benefit from detox. It is really the more common, everyday people who have habits that I call a SNACC -- which stands for sugar, nicotine, alcohol, caffeine and chemicals. Probably well over 90 percent of people have a habit of at least one of these substances. I think over time our habits are what create our problems, especially what we eat.

Mike: So, that's sugar, nicotine, alcohol, caffeine and chemicals?

Dr. Haas: SNACC -- sugar, nicotine, alcohol, caffeine and chemicals. The chapters in the book, *The New Detox Diet*, cover each of those.

Mike: When you say chemicals, what type of chemicals are you referring to?

Dr. Haas: I am referring to food chemicals in processed foods, food additives, food coloring and food flavoring. I am referring to chemicals that we use in over-the-counter medicines and even prescription medicines. I am not telling people just to go off all these things, although getting off the food chemicals certainly does not hurt.

I find if we go through the detoxification process, we do not just turn to medicines or drugs. If we do not feel well, we more clearly ask ourselves, "Why am I not feeling well? What is the problem? What are the causes of this problem?" We do this through an integrated approach, and we don't just say, "What can I take to make this to go away?"

We focus more on why a problem is present and what is needed for healing. Typically, one of my overall philosophies in medicine and healthcare is that our body -- and how we feel and how we look and whether we are healthy or not -- is result of our life. It has to do

with our genetics, our upbringing and the way we go about living -- our diet, our exercise levels and our stresses. Even illnesses that we have had over time and how we went about treating them can be a factor.

We often just treat symptoms with drugs and don't really work on why the symptoms presented themselves in the first place. Most of us do not live perfectly. Most of us do not live in a way that creates disease. I encourage people to support health. I do what I call "health care," and I do less "disease care." In other words, I focus people on the positive -- the things that they *can* do -- and also on the negative -- the things that they should avoid. Detoxification involves both things. There are a lot of positive actions we can take, and there are also things to avoid, so there are two aspects of detoxification and preventative medicine.

Mike: Right.

Dr. Haas: The basic ideas of lifestyle medicine and preventative medicine include nutrition, exercising and moving the body to keep it working and flexible, getting proper sleep, learning to manage stress and keeping a positive attitude. What I have found since I became a doctor in early 70s is that I must get people to shift their attitude to a more positive one and remind them that this is the only body they have, so they must think, "I am going to love it, and I am going to take care of it." If I can instill that attitude and inspire that attitude in my patients or people who read my books or people who hear me speak in public, they are likely going to eat better and exercise and make sure they get proper sleep and can deal with stressors. Attitude is really an important factor.

Mike: I want to talk about your philosophy that certain elements of nutrition are necessary but others -- like the elements SNACC -- must be avoided. What are the common criticisms you hear about this? Have you heard the criticism like, "People should enjoy life and not try to avoid everything that we say is causing disease?" What is your response to that kind of criticism?

Dr. Haas: I am just finishing up a detoxification with two groups of about 30 people, and I do this to help people change habits. I was so touched last evening when we went around the circle and everybody talked about what they were experiencing. They are getting off major caffeine issues, cleaning the diet and working in what I called a "purification process." As a side note, on my website, www.ElsonHaas.com, there is an article called *Purification Process* that gives a really good overview of the process.

With my groups, we have started paying attention to what we are eating and the positive energy that we feel and how good we sleep. Maybe half a dozen people have said to me, "I am sleeping like I have not slept since I was a baby. I am not snoring. When I wake up my body feels more flexible. My digestion and my intestinal tract feel so much better. I am not having headaches. I am not congested during the day."

People did some hard work getting off sugar, bread, alcohol and caffeine. One man was on 10 cups of coffee a day, and he is now off of caffeine, and his body has dropped a significant amount of weight, and he has started to get energy back. One person got off ice cream after it was her favorite food, and her whole body feels different. We learn to shift the enjoyment of certain foods to the enjoyment of feeling good and healthy.

I got into this in 1975, and I was overweight. I was not healthy. I was not really sick, but I was congested and had allergies. I would sneeze everyday. I woke up congested. I could not sleep clearly, and I was eating the average American diet. I got motivated to go on a juice cleanse, and I remember waking up the third day and I could breathe clearly for the first time in years.

My body got away from what I thought was allergies, and which I now realize was a combination of mild allergies and a lot of congestion. In the ensuing weeks, my body started to feel lighter and clearer, and I realized, "This is how I want to feel, and I am willing to do what it takes to continue to feel this way." I realized I needed fresh fruit and vegetables -- really wholesome foods. I needed fresh juice and smoothies, and I started eating a more vegetarian diet. I have not had red meat since that time, although I do eat some fish and even a little bit of poultry.

Many people would eat a diet primarily made up of treats: Fast foods, cakes, cookies, sodas and chips. Those are not foods we should be eating. Most of us should be focusing on vegetables, fruits, some appropriate proteins and grains, beans and seeds.

The dairy connection

Mike: I noticed dairy is not one of the items in SNACC, but for many people, dairy is associated with a lot of stagnation.

Dr. Haas: A lot of people are reactive to dairy. When you look at the purification process, the first level is dealing with the substances, the SNACC. The second level is dealing with foods that we may we overdo, and the top three that can cause great problems -- the "big three" I call them -- are wheat, dairy products and sugar.

The other four, which, combined with the first three make up what I call the "sensitive seven," are eggs, corn, soy and peanuts. Corn is so prevalent now, with corn syrup as a new sweetener, and people are sensitive to it. Soy is a reactive food, even though it is a potentially healthy food. There are people who are more reactive to soy. Eggs and peanuts are common reactors. I do not say that these foods should not ever be used or be part of diet, but they are overused, and many people have negative reactions to them.

I encourage people to experiment, and by that I really mean experience. I may give the same diet with the same supplements and the same prescription drugs to one person that I already gave to 10 others, and the last 10 people I gave it to may be fine, but the 11th person may not be fine with it. I encourage people to be aware of themselves and what they are experiencing. When you do a detox program, it is because you want to make a change from feeling and living one way to feeling better. People must take their life apart and put it back together.

How the detox process really works

Mike: I am curious about the way you work with your groups. What kind of time period do you work with, because a lot of people may attempt to take caffeine out of their diet, for example, on their own, and they might do it for two days and then go back to it.

Dr. Haas: The behavior psychologist tells us it takes 21 days, or three weeks, to change habits significantly, so I work with people over a three-week program. Before we start the program, I go into all kinds of plans and options with people, and some people do more strict things than others. During the second week, I have them do something more challenging, perhaps a diet that gets them off certain foods, and then we go into the detox diet, which includes more fruits in the morning and steamed vegetables at lunch and dinner.

Mike: Do they stay with you for 21 days?

Dr. Haas: No. I believe that people need to be able to continue living their own lives - going to work, exercising and being around their families -- so they can continue living healthy lives after I am gone.

Mike: Absolutely.

Dr. Haas: In the spring, I do juice cleansing, and I do that with a group for about two weeks. It is a little more focused group, and it's a little more dramatic experience for people.

When we start doing a detox, we really develop a new relationship to food. Part of the whole idea of detox is getting off the SNACCs. People start having these things everyday, and they become dependent on them. They need them for energy or for relaxation. I want people to be able to create a new, healthy relationship with these things, and to do that, you need to be able to break yourself of them and see what you are doing.

Mike: People tend to notice that you have never really tasted foods until they are off of these substances.

Dr. Haas: When you eat an apple or a salad again, the flavors of those foods are quite amazing. Most people stop feeling like they need these other fatty, salty and sweet foods. I was at the beginning of this whole movement of nutrition and natural medicine in this country, and I would tell people at that time, "Every step away from the garden and orchard is a loss of vitality and nutrition. Eat and get back to nature and live within the laws of nature." There are a lot of things you can do differently, and I am trying to change the way people think and live.

Mike: It is fascinating to realize how long you have been a proponent of this philosophy. You were pioneer and remain a pioneer in this area.

Dr. Haas: In the mid 70s, when I started writing, I wanted to be a pioneer and health care deliverer. I wanted to be an author and a teacher. I think at that time there was not even a handful of books on "new medicine," or integrated medicine, which uses multiple disciplines to support people's health.

My book, *Staying Healthy with the Seasons*, was really one of the original integrated medicine books. It is based on the simple philosophy, the seasons philosophy, that there are cycles of life and we should adapt and change as we move through the seasons. We should eat differently in spring and summer than we might in the winter.

We should eat what nature provides -- a diet that protects us from the environment. When it is really cold out, we should eat foods that require more heat and fuel, and in the summer we should eat more cooling foods like fresh fruits and vegetables. I think it is a healthy and wise philosophy for us to adapt, rather than get fixed on one perfect diet. There is no perfect diet. Each of us is a little bit different, and you can find a good diet that represents what you need around the whole year. I think, ideally, you should not eat the exact same way in hot weather as in cold weather.

Mike: In your book, *Staying Healthy with Nutrition*, you offer special diets for pregnant woman, active athletic types and a lot of other different cases.

Dr. Haas: Again, it depends where we are in life. The book also has a lot of recipes, and my book, *A Cookbook for All Seasons*, looks at things we can eat at different times of year. In the autumn, there is garlic soup. In the summer, there is cucumber salad; it changes with what is available. The best chefs in the world are the ones that go to the market and find what is the freshest. They create a recipe around what they find that is the nicest and best in the marketplace.

Way beyond medical school

Mike: You are trained as a conventional medical doctor, and at some point you became aware of your health and took responsibility for it and became a proponent of a healthy, preventive medicine approach. How did this transition happen for you?

Dr. Haas: I went to medical school from 1968 to 1972, and I was in that time of being a rebel. I started to ask questions as a student, and after I got out of my medical school internship, I wanted to learn about health. I started with me. I was my first patient. I needed to know how I could get this body to weigh 50 pounds less. If it weren't for that decision, I do not know if I would be alive today. I would at least, certainly, be on three or four medicines, like many of my patients are.

I am in my later 50s now, and I still feel healthy and vital. Since I started doing this 25 years ago, it has been a process of education and looking at and caring about health over disease. I decided I was going to be a health-oriented preventive medicine doc, and I focused my attention on that and started to influence patients and whole groups of people to start thinking about health and getting motivated.

I call myself a "philosopher physician," based on the old Chinese system of practice, because I talk to people about what it takes to be healthy. I feel like my greatest gift as a physician is giving somebody the motivation to take better care of themselves and to make health a higher priority. It is a lot more work to fix things than to maintain good health.

Mike: You are the founder of the Preventive Medical Center in California. Do patients visit from all over the country or around the world?

Dr. Haas: I have seen people from different countries and different states, but primarily I see people all around the local area. I have been there a long time and I have books out and I have website. I do not sell anything on my website; I just offer information for people.

At the facility, I have an osteopath who does structural work. I offer acupuncture, psychotherapy, stress management and things like that. I really think that we can improve on health care if we do a couple of things. One is that doctors' offices need to be more health supportive and not just disease crisis centers. Also, you as the patient must become more self-responsible and even financially responsible for taking care of yourself so that you do not costly need crisis care. That is what it is going to take to repair our falling-apart health care system.

Mike: In your own practice, are you able to motivate patients to take more responsibility? Is that successful?

Dr. Haas: Definitely. People do not come to see me unless they are ready for homework. I have them read, and I have them do this and that. I am very gentle and kind, and I also can be tough if I need to. I am a straight talker, and I do not beat around the bush with people. I coach and get people motivated to do things for themselves.

Mike: On a national scale, why do you think there is really no emphasis, or very little emphasis, on prevention?

Dr. Haas: I think a Western doctor's focus is learning how to diagnose and treat disease. We are not trained in prevention. We are not trained in nutrition. I had to do that after I became a doctor, because it was interesting to me, and I felt it was important. There are more and more doctors every year and every day that are learning a great deal more about preventive medicine and nutrition, but the focus of the medical system is not prevention.

Mike: Do you think change is coming in medical schools?

Dr. Haas: It has changed a lot. I feel that there are more medical schools, as well as naturopathic schools and osteopathic schools, that are a little more health oriented, but I want to help get nutrition education into more medical schools. When people start cleaning up and changing their diet and dropping weight, they start to feel better. The medicines are too strong because their body becomes healthier.

Mike: Is this common that once people go through the detox process, they are able to get off of prescription drugs?

Dr. Haas: Yes, very common. I have people who have been on blood pressure medicines for 20 years, and they get their weight down and start eating differently, and they get off prescriptions.

Mike: What about diabetes?

Dr. Haas: It depends on the state of it. If it is early diabetes, and a person eating a poor diet wakes up and changes, they may not need medicines at all. It happens all the time. It just depends on the individual. I am not at all telling people to do my detox programs and throw their medicines and doctors away. I am telling people be conscious and aware. Try different things, and see how you feel, and if you start to feel better, then keep with them.

You've got to learn what works for you and what you are capable of doing. My dad died way too young because his attitude was, "I do not want to go to doctors because they tell me things I do not want to hear. I just want to enjoy the days I have." Some people have that attitude, but I believe my dad died at least five to 10 years before he might have, had he taken a little more incentive.

Mike: Speaking of this attitude, it seems there is a great reluctance for people to admit that they are addicted to sugar. Do you find this to be true in your groups?

Dr. Haas: People have an emotional connection to sugar. It is the number one addictive substance on the planet earth. It contributes to diabetes, and it's the single most important cause of obesity.

Mike: How do people gain self-guided experiences similar to what they might get in one of your groups? Do you offer advice for that in your book?

Dr. Haas: The information is there. I encourage people to get their husband or wife or friends to do this with them because they can talk about it and not feel isolated. With a simple detox diet, you are eating three meals a day and changing what you are putting in your body. You are focusing on what you are doing, rather than what you are not doing, as I mentioned earlier.

Mike: Thank you very much for your time today, and I want to encourage people to go to your website, ElsonHaas.com, and they can find your books, including *The New Detox Diet* and *Staying Healthy with the Seasons*.

*Note from Mike Adams: I personally find the wisdom, experience and advice of Dr. Haas to be top-notch. It was his book, **Staying Healthy With Nutrition**, that was instrumental in my own nutritional healing path. I not only read that book cover to cover, I outlined the entire thing (it's over 1,000 pages), and recorded my own audio summary that I listened to while jogging.*

Dr. Haas is not some newcomer to the field of nutritional medicine, he's one of its genuine founders. He was teaching sound nutritional practices well before many of today's top authors and health celebrities were even dreaming about healing with food (including myself). His contributions to the world of healing are immense.

*I cannot recommend the books of Dr. Haas strongly enough. If you are still consuming caffeine, sugar, nicotine, or if you're experiencing cravings for sweet or salty foods, I urge you to run down to your local bookstore right now and pick up a copy of **The New Detox Diet**. Or visit www.ElsonHaas.com/Books.html to see all the books authored by Dr. Haas.*

- Mike Adams, the Health Ranger

About the Author



The Health Ranger (Mike Adams) is a holistic nutritionist with over 5,000 hours of study on nutrition, wellness, food toxicology and the true causes of disease and health. He is the author of *The 7 Laws of Nutrition*, *Grocery Warning*, *Health Seduction*, and many other books available at <http://www.TruthPublishing.com>.

Adams is also the creator of the popular *Honest Food Guide*, a free downloadable nutritional guide found at <http://www.HonestFoodGuide.org>. In addition, more than 1,500 free articles on health, nutrition and wellness have been authored by Adams and are available at <http://www.NewsTarget.com>.

Adams uses no prescription drugs whatsoever and relies exclusively on natural health, whole foods, superfoods, nutritional supplements and exercise to achieve optimum health. To prove the value of nutrition and physical exercise in enhancing health, Adams publishes detailed statistics on his own blood chemistry (with full lab results) at <http://www.NewsTarget.com/AdamsHealthStats.html>.

Other books by the Health Ranger

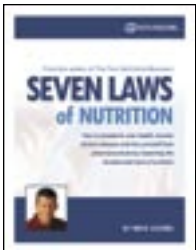


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