

***“The greatest happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved; loved for ourselves, or rather, loved in spite of ourselves.”***

- **Victor Hugo**

It's Valentine's Day, so I wanted to find a quote about love. You wouldn't believe how many of them are out there, but this one spoke to me. I think the reason is because it's a really good reminder that none of us is perfect and mistakes will be made. But in spite of that, when you're with the right person, he or she is going to love you regardless of what you may say or do. Love seems to be a constant learning process and here are a few of the things I've learned over the years: I've learned that love isn't something you find. It's something that somehow finds you and it usually happens when you least expect it. I've learned it isn't easy, though I think it should be and I wish it were. I've learned that it comes easier for some than others. I've learned that love allows you to be yourself. I've learned that love can hurt, but it can also heal. I've learned that if you love someone, say it and if you mess up, apologize. But perhaps the Bible says it best in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7: *“Love is always patient and kind. It is never jealous. Love is never boastful or conceited. It is never rude or selfish. It does not take offense and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people's sins, but delights in the truth. It is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope and to endure whatever comes.”*

Yours in health,

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## **The Benefits of Activated Charcoal**



Many of you may not have heard about activated charcoal, but it's completely different than what you use to cook out on a grill. You probably weren't aware that the charcoal for your grill is a proven carcinogen and contains substances toxic to people. Therefore, charcoal briquets should NEVER be eaten. However, activated charcoal (“AC”) is a wonderful supplement and another tool for your natural healing toolbox that can be used for longevity and overall good health. AC has been used since the early 1800s as a poison antidote. It's used in the Emergency Room to treat prescription drug or over-the-counter drug overdoses. But one of its most important uses is for detoxification. According to David “Avocado” Wolfe, a nutritional expert and best-selling author, *“Detoxification is more important than nutrition.”*

Toxins are everywhere. Not only are they present in food and water, but they're also in the air we breathe. There have been many reports recently about a mysterious “fog” in different parts of the country that has been making people sick. Chem-trails used to be a conspiracy theory, but now states are starting to ban them. I'm sure you recently heard that red dye #2, a very well-known toxin, was finally banned in the US. Unfortunately, this ban won't go into effect until 2027, but it's progress, very slow progress. Unfortunately, toxins are also present in things like lotions, shampoos, make-up, cleaning supplies, carpet and furniture, to name just a few. I'm very hopeful that once Bobby Kennedy is confirmed as Secretary of Health and Human Services, many (or even all) of these toxins will be banned. Probably the most amazing thing about AC is it absorbs at least **100 times** its weight in toxins!

AC works by trapping toxins and chemicals in the gut and preventing their absorption. Its porous texture has a negative electrical charge, which causes it to attract positively charged molecules such as toxins and gases. Because it's not absorbed into your body, it carries the toxins that are bound to it out of your body.

AC is made by burning natural, carbon-rich materials such as coconut shells, bamboo, wood, olive pits or coal in low-oxygen concentrations. This process extracts hydrogen, methane and tar from those items, which reduces its weight and creates a black, mostly carbon substance. The remaining charcoal substance is activated by steaming it at very high temperatures to eliminate any remaining non-carbon elements. The one I take comes from coconut shells.

Now that you know a little bit about AC, here are just a few of its great benefits:

1. **Helps the Digestive System.** While doing research on this topic, I learned a new word and it's applicable for how AC clears out junk from the digestive system: *adsorption*. No, I didn't mean to say absorption, which is completely different. Essentially, as I touched on above, what adsorption does is allow toxins (which have a positive charge) to bind to AC (which has a negative charge). When this process happens in the intestinal tract, the microflora that lives there starts to improve because the toxins are carried out of the body, attached to the AC. That makes AC a wonderful supplement to help with gas, indigestion, bloating, a stomach-ache and even diarrhea. Personally, it helps me when my stomach starts to growl. I'm also told it helps with hangovers.
2. **Helps Eliminate Heavy Metals.** Most people have heavy metal poisoning and don't even know it. Healthy foods like tuna and swordfish contain a ton of mercury, which can remain in the body for a very long time. AC helps remove not only mercury, but also arsenic, lead and copper. It does this by the process I described above. Did you know the herb cilantro is also a heavy metals detoxifier? AC also has the ability to get these metals out of water. Most water filters contain AC.
3. **Helps with Dental Health.** I've been using fluoride-free toothpaste with charcoal for quite a while. It helps with whitening the teeth and is an overall good detoxification agent for the mouth. There are also claims that it is antifungal, antibacterial and antiviral, which is a positive for oral health.
4. **Helps with Kidney Function.** It does this by reducing the number of waste products the kidneys have to filter. This could potentially be beneficial for people suffering from chronic kidney disease. Their kidneys have a harder time removing toxins from the body. As you now know, the AC binds to the toxins and helps the body eliminate them.
5. **Helps Lower Cholesterol.** This is because it can bind cholesterol and cholesterol-containing bile acids in the gut, which prevents the body from absorbing them. I found a study done over almost a 30-year period in which AC helped lower LDL cholesterol levels (the bad one) by 41% and total overall cholesterol by 25%. HDL cholesterol (the good one) increased by 8%. Participants took 8 grams, three times a day. This is way more than the amount I take daily, which is generally 1,200 mg.
6. **Helps with Brain Fog.** Sometimes, no matter how well we sleep or eat, we just don't think clearly. This is likely caused by the build-up of toxins in the body, which can cross the blood-brain barrier. Since AC binds to toxins, it ultimately slows the rate by which the brain is affected by these toxins. Additionally, AC helps to absorb substances in the intestines that are connected to inflammation. You may not be aware that systemic inflammation has been linked to cognitive decline.
7. **Helps in Emergency Situations.** I think most people know that AC is used worldwide for accidental overdoses or poisoning, including from snake and insect bites. It can also help fight infections and help heal wounds.

There are a couple of different types of activated charcoal available.

- **Activated Charcoal Powder:** This is the most common form and you can get it either loose (to mix in water), in capsules or compressed into a pill. Any of those options works and you should simply choose the type that works best for you. I take the capsule.
- **Super Charcoal:** This one is a very different than just activated charcoal as it contains "C60" carbon molecules, which are typically in a good-grade oil base (something like olive oil). Regular AC only contains about 1% of the C60 molecules. As you can imagine, the Super Charcoal takes detox to a whole other level and helps clear out toxins at more of the cellular level. I have not yet tried this one.

You're probably wondering if there are any side effects from taking AC. I'm not aware of any, other than potential constipation if you don't drink enough water while taking it. You also need to ensure that it comes from a source that is non-GMO. The one that I take does contain a warning that it *"affects the absorption of nutrients and should not be taken within 2-3 hours of eating, taking medication or other supplements."* Your stool may be darker (or even black), but that is not cause for alarm. It's actually a good sign that it's doing what it's supposed to be doing.

The amount you take really depends on you. Many people take more when they travel. Others will take it before a meal where they might be exposed to more toxins (such as non-organic or other non-healthy ingredients used in restaurants). I usually take mine as soon as I get up and as I mentioned above, I take 1,200 mg by way of two 600 mg capsules. The picture at the beginning of this article is the one I take. Please let me know if you have any questions and I hope you found this helpful.

Have a wonderful month.