




**Celebrity  
Diagnosis**  
Teachable Moments in Medicine™



**Top 5  
Celebrity  
Health Fads**

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Researchers have speculated that **we are psychologically programmed to believe what celebrities tell us.** This programming may not be hazardous to our health when it involves our choices about fashion, footwear, hair styles and perfume. But what about diets, supplements and medical practices that become popular because of celebrity endorsements and testimonials?

- ★ Should we *detox and cleanse* like **Gwyneth Paltrow**?
- ★ Is **Rihanna's party-girl drip** a good treatment for chronic fatigue or a hangover cure?
- ★ **Miley Cyrus** tweeted that "*Gluten is crappp,*" claiming that being gluten-free will improve your skin and mental health. Really?
- ★ Will the alcohol in *kombucha tea* cause you to fail a Breathalyzer test like **Lindsay Lohan**?
- ★ **Madonna, Demi Moore, Matthew McConaughey, A-Rod** and *Red Hot Chili Peppers* frontman **Anthony Kiedis** are all pushing coconut water. Why?

The following 6 short chapters will answer these questions and more.

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# Clean Detox



According to **Gwyneth Paltrow**, the answer is “yes” as she swallows her twice daily cocktail of lemon juice, maple syrup and cayenne pepper. Cleanse master **Dr. Alejandro Junger** claims that “When our systems are overtaxed, they begin to break down in a multitude of ways. Allergies, headaches, depression, irritable bowel syndrome, fatigue, weight gain and insomnia are just a few of the symptoms that can result. The majority of these common ailments are the direct result of toxin build-up in our systems that have accumulated during the course of our daily lives.”

But according to **Dr. Peter Pressman** of Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles “*the science behind detox theory is deeply flawed.* The body already has multiple systems in place — including the liver, kidneys, and gastrointestinal tract — that do a perfectly good job of eliminating toxins from the body within hours of consumption.”

Detox (short for detoxification) diets usually consist of a variable timeframe of altered diet high in fluids, fruits and vegetables while eliminating alcohol, caffeine and processed foods. Colonic cleansing (enemas) are frequently included as well.

Some diets also include special herbs or supplements which are supposed to enhance toxin removal.

Many people will have temporary weight loss from these diets due to a loss of fluids and some muscle, not fat loss. As international expert on alternative medicine, **Dr. Edzard Ernst**, has said: *“The only part of you that cleansing and detox will make lighter is your wallet.”*

## Takeaways

- ★ Cleansing and detox diets are fads based on marketing, not science.
- ★ Healthy kidneys, liver, intestines and other systems efficiently remove toxins or waste products from our bodies.
- ★ Weight loss from detox diets is mostly temporary water loss.
- ★ Enemas and colon cleansing should only be used to treat constipation or prepare for certain medical procedures as advised by your healthcare professional.

## For More Information

[Detox Diets and Cleanses](#)

[Colonic Irrigation](#)

[Celebrity Diagnosis Guide to Diets and Weight Loss 2012](#)

[How To Tell If You're Constipated and What To Do About It](#)

# Myers' Cocktail



Last year **Rihanna** tweeted a photo of herself getting an intravenous (IV) solution she called a *party girl drip*. TV and music personality **Simon Cowell** says he enjoys a weekly infusion of *Myers' Cocktail* to combat the fatigue caused by his high-demand work as a producer and talent judge. **Madonna** also uses this “therapy” regularly.

No wonder that “[Drip Bars](#)” have sprung up in South Beach and Las Vegas where party animals can seek relief for whatever ails them.

About 40 years ago, a Baltimore doctor named **John Myers** devised a solution of vitamins and minerals that he used intravenously to treat [a variety of medical conditions](#) including asthma attacks, migraines, fatigue, fibromyalgia, muscle spasm, upper respiratory tract infections, chronic sinusitis, seasonal allergies, cardiovascular disease and other conditions. Ever since then, *Myers' Cocktail* (also known as intravenous micronutrient therapy or IVMT) has been popular among people who practice complementary and alternative medicine (CAM).

Myers' Cocktail contains calcium, magnesium, vitamin C and various B vitamins and is often “customized” with other ingredients. The vitamins are present in *much larger doses* than those found in

vitamin pills. For example, the amount of vitamin C is about 300 times larger than the recommended daily dose.

An infusion of Myers' Cocktail takes between 20 and 60 minutes and costs anywhere from \$100 to \$300 per treatment. Is there any evidence that Myers' Cocktail or similar IV vitamin treatments are useful for treating any diseases or other health conditions? No, not really. Although there are lots of stories about people with various conditions who said they felt better after an infusion, stories aren't scientific evidence.

For example, a [research study](#) on patients with fibromyalgia, paid for the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine ([NCCAM](#)), showed no difference between intravenous micronutrient therapy (Myers' Solution) and a placebo solution of salt water. (Fibromyalgia is a condition of muscle pain and fatigue characterized by "tender points" on the body, specifically the neck, shoulders, back, hips, arms and legs.)

## Takeaways

- ★ Myers' Cocktail is a form of IV vitamin and mineral therapy that was invented about 40 years ago.
- ★ It is popular among practitioners of complementary and alternative medicine who use it to treat a wide variety of medical and other health conditions.
- ★ People who feel better after receiving Myers' Cocktail are experiencing a placebo effect.

## For More Information

[Intravenous Vitamin Therapy: The Latest Celebrity Health Fad](#)



# Gluten Free Diets

Serbian athlete **Novak Djokovic** conquered the tennis world in 2011 with a gluten-free diet, according to [\*The Wall Street Journal\*](#). It turned out that Djokovic's nutritionist discovered that the tennis pro was suffering from a diet allergy called **gluten-sensitive enteropathy (GSE)**. Once he gave up the offending foods, Djokovic's serve went from "sloppy" to "precise, fluid and devastating." What did the champion give up to win Wimbledon? Pizza, pasta, pretzels, bread, beer and everything else containing gluten.

*Fox & Friends* co-host **Elisabeth Hasselbeck** has GSE, also known as **Celiac Disease**. She discovered her allergy to gluten in 2001 when she was a contestant on *Survivor: The Australian Outback*. For years before this, Elisabeth suffered from cramps, indigestion, diarrhea as well as severe fatigue. Misdiagnosed as having irritable bowel disease, she eventually diagnosed herself while on *Survivor* because during a month long, severely restricted diet, her symptoms went away. Misdiagnosis of celiac disease is fairly common as described in Dr. Jerome Groopman's book [\*How Doctors Think\*](#) (or don't). Ms. Hasselbeck went on to write a "gluten-free survival guide" entitled [\*The G-Free Diet\*](#) and talked about her experiences when she was a co-host of *The View*.

**Miley Cyrus** has encouraged everyone to get on the gluten-free bandwagon: "@mileycyrus everyone should try no gluten for a week! The change in your skin, physical and mental health is amazing! U won't go back!"



Many people confuse gluten-free diets with a low carb diets. Although gluten-free diets eliminate some carbohydrates such as bread and pasta, they don't eliminate other high carb foods such as rice and corn. *A gluten-free diet is not a low calorie diet!* One popular low carb, weight loss diet is the Paleo or Caveman Diet which also happens to be gluten-free.

So is gluten really dietary “crap” as Miley Cyrus believes? A lot of us seem to think so: nearly 30% of people say they are trying to decrease the amount of gluten in their diet even though only 1% of people actually have Celiac Disease or GSE. According Dee Sandquist, speaking for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, *there is nothing magical about eliminating gluten that will improve your health or enhance weight loss unless you are intolerant to gluten.*

## Takeaways

- ★ Gluten is a protein present in wheat, rye, oats and barley and all of the foods and other products made from or containing them.
- ★ There's absolutely nothing wrong with consuming gluten unless you have celiac disease or gluten sensitive enteropathy (GSE).
- ★ Gluten-free diets are not low carb or low calorie diets and will not, by themselves, help you to lose weight. They probably won't improve your tennis game either.

## For More Information

[Gluten-free at Last](#)

[Can a Gluten-free Diet Make You Thin?](#)

[A Paleolithic Prescription for Health](#)

# Kombucha Tea



In 2010, **Lindsay Lohan** was ordered by a Los Angeles court to wear an alcohol-monitoring SCRAM ankle bracelet. (SCRAM stands for Secure Continuous Remote Alcohol Monitor and it works like a Breathalyzer but on sweat instead of breath.)

When the alarm went off that she was drinking again, Lindsay professed her innocence and blamed the false signal on her new detox and energizing drink, Kombucha tea.

Many other celebrities have been seen sipping Kombucha tea including **Gwyneth Paltrow, Kirsten Dunst, Madonna, Halle Berry, Meg Ryan, Anna Paquin, Cher, Barbra Streisand, Alec Baldwin** and **Susan Sarandon**. What exactly is Kombucha and why is it so popular among the Hollywood crowd?

Kombucha is a slightly sweet, slightly acidic tea beverage that has been consumed in China for about 2000 years and spread to Russia and Germany in more recent centuries. The tea is made by adding a “symbiotic colony of bacteria and yeast” (SCOBY) to sugar and tea and allowing the mixture to ferment. The resulting liquid contains vinegar (acetic acid), B vitamins and a number of other chemical compounds including antioxidants and small amounts of alcohol.

Kombucha has long been used as a **folk medicine** to prevent or treat a wide variety of diseases and other conditions including diabetes, heart disease, infections including HIV/AIDS and cancer. The theory behind kombucha’s medicinal properties is based the belief that chemicals in the fermented tea:

- ★ Help our livers remove toxic substances from the body
- ★ Include antioxidants that help protect our organs from damage by free radicals
- ★ Help us process energy more efficiently
- ★ Support our immune system by decreasing inflammation

There is laboratory evidence for many of these effects but *all of the studies have been done in experimental animals, specifically rats and mice*. These results may apply to humans but, according to [ClinicalTrials.gov](http://ClinicalTrials.gov), no human studies have been done. Kombucha is not approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to treat any human illness.

There have been reports that drinking “home brew” or excessive amounts of kombucha has led to serious illness and even death. Dr. Edzard Ernst has concluded that “the largely undetermined benefits do not outweigh the documented risks of kombucha. It can therefore not be recommended for therapeutic use.” According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), drinking this tea in quantities typically consumed (approximately 4 oz daily) may not cause adverse effects in healthy persons; however, the potential health risks are unknown for those with preexisting health problems or those who drink excessive quantities of the tea.

## Takeaways

- ★ Kombucha tea is used as a folk remedy to prevent or treat a variety of illnesses.
- ★ Studies in laboratory animals have indicated potential beneficial health effects.
- ★ Kombucha tea is not approved to prevent or treat diseases by the FDA.
- ★ Drinking kombucha tea in reasonable quantities is generally safe for healthy people but may be risky for people with preexisting conditions and/or those who drink excessive amounts.

## For More Information

[Kombucha Celebrity GOOP](#)

[Folk Remedies in Hollywood: The Case of Kombucha Tea](#)

[LiLo SCRAM warning over Kombucha Tea](#)



# Coconut Water

Back in 2009-2010, when coconut water was just starting to become popular, a number of web sites claimed that coconut water was a “**natural alternative to Viagra**” because it “stimulates and strengthens reproductive functions, especially in men. In a medical study, women in their mid-sixties reported an increase in their libido after drinking coconut water.” **No such medical studies exist.** These claims originated in a 2005 book entitled *Coconut Cures* by Bruce Fife who cites no evidence to support them. The book also claims that drinking coconut water is effective in dissolving kidney stones.

Luckily, brand name producers of coconut water such as **Vita Coco, O.N.E., Naked** and **Zico** don't make these outrageous medical claims. These companies do however promote coconut water as “nutrient-packed,” “mega-electrolyte,” “super-hydrating” drink that is “full of natural Oomph...that whoops major butt.”

Let's compare this miracle product with the original rehydrating sports drink, **Gatorade**, and also with a banana and skim milk. As you can see from the table below, coconut water compares well with Gatorade. It has small amounts of a few more minerals and less sugar but also less sodium which is an important electrolyte. But **coconut water is much less nutritious than a banana and hardly “nutrient-packed” compared with a banana or glass of skim milk.** Of course, the banana and milk each have about twice the calories as an 11 oz. serving of coconut water or Gatorade. But **calories = energy** and so we can say that coconut water and Gatorade provide only about half the energy of either a banana or glass of milk.

	O.N.E. coconut water*	Gatorade*	Banana (medium)	Fat-free milk*
Calories	60	70	105	120
Fat	-	-	-	-
Cholesterol	-	-	-	7.5 mg (3%)
Sodium	60 mg (3%)	154 mg (7%)	1 mg (0%)	180 mg (7%)
Potassium	670 mg (19%)	42 mg (1.4%)	422 mg (12%)	-
Sugars	14 g	19.6 g	14 g	17 g
Fiber	-	-	3 g (12%)	-
Protein	1 g	0 g	1 g	13 g
Calcium	4%	-	6%	75%
Magnesium	6%	-	32%	1.4%
Phosphorus	2%	-	26%	4%
Vitamin A	-	-	76%	32%
Vitamin C	-	-	10%	6%
Folic Acid	-	-	24%	1.4%

\*11.2 oz serving size, data from [FoodFacts.com](http://FoodFacts.com)

So if coconut water is only slightly better than Gatorade and much less nutritious than a banana or milk, **why are so many celebrities excited about coconut water?** Because they have invested money in the companies that produce and sell the drink.

## Takeaways

- ★ Coconut water has more potassium, less sodium and less sugar than Gatorade.
- ★ A banana or a glass of fat-free milk has much higher nutritional value and contains more energy than coconut water.
- ★ Regular water, tap or bottled, is all that most people (except maybe professional athletes) need for hydration.

## For More Information

[Sometimes you feel like a nut: Coconut water as a health elixir](#)

# “Baloney Detection Kit”



Health claims for many products endorsed by celebrities are greatly exaggerated, based on flawed science or just made up. In some cases, these endorsements represent conflicts of interest, where celebs pushing products have a financial stake in getting you to use them.

Watch this video to learn how to recognize baloney when you see it.



## For More Information

[The Placebo Effect](#)

[National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine](#)

[Guidelines for Using Complementary and Alternative Health Practices](#)

[Do You Believe in Magic?: The Sense and Nonsense of Alternative Medicine](#)

[Why People Believe Weird Things: Pseudoscience, Superstition, and Other Confusions of Our Time](#)

# Feedback

Please visit and write to us at [Celebrity Diagnosis Magazine....](#)



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The information is **not to be used for self-diagnosis or treatment.**