



How Digestion Works: Follow That Twinkie !

#1 Surprise Side Benefit of Colon Cleansing/Detox?
NO MORE HANGOVERS!
(Your clean liver works better...)

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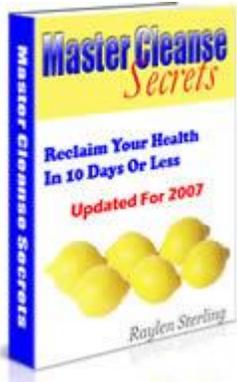
My thanks to Drs. Mehmet C. Oz and Michael F. Roizen for helping me understand how the body works. Their two fabulous books, You: The Owner's Manual and You on a Diet, take the mystery out of – and put the wonder into – the human body. Dr. Oz is a regular on The Oprah Show.

Where the Colon Fits into Things

To understand how digestion works, let's follow a [Twinkie](#) on its way through the human body. Okay, maybe it's not something everyone wants to think about. Somehow we've been told that these body processes are dirty, but hey, we all have 'em!

We tend to think of the digestive system like some sort of 'indoor plumbing' ... like the ¾-inch copper pipes in our houses. But these aren't inert tubes. In fact, they're pretty amazing: at different stages they send signals to other organs, play gatekeeper to let specific things in and out of the system, and metabolize that Twinkie as it passes through.

Have you heard of the [famous Master Cleanse](#)? Just stuff from your pantry? Well, I found this terrific eBook that gives you all the secrets to its success!



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Actually, the human body is a sophisticated series of overlapping pipes and cables, to continue the comparison. Veins and arteries pick up and transport blood, oxygen, and other nutrients all over your body. Neurons send messages throughout your brain and body to other neurons and muscles. And then there's the largest pipe of all: the digestive tract.

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In school we learned this about how digestion works :

- food goes in through the mouth,
- down the esophagus, and into the stomach,
- then through 26 feet of small intestines to the colon,
- then out.

Not so simple. But what *is* simple is that everything will either be (1) broken down and picked up by your bloodstream and liver to be used as energy ... or (2) broken down and stored as fat ... or (3) processed as waste and expelled on the far side of your colon.

Follow That Twinkie !



The mouth: Ignoring for a moment all the amazing sensory things your tongue does to make food appealing, here's what happens. The mouth receives the food, the teeth chew it to prepare it for the digestion process, glands start secreting enzymes to break it down ... and down goes the Twinkie. Down the esophagus, and through the esophageal junction

into the stomach, at a funny angle to keep your food from being able to come back up easily.

The stomach: Your stomach has a thick mucus lining to keep it from being damaged by all the acid and digestive fluids that get to work on that Twinkie at this point. Only alcohol is absorbed at this stage of digestion, so nothing useful from our famous Twinkie. And once it has been broken down some more in your stomach, it moves on into the small intestine.

The small intestine: This is where most of the nutrients are absorbed from what you eat, in this 26-foot length of *intelligent* tubing with neurotransmitters and hormones real similar to those in your brain. (Yep, 'fraid so.) Once here, the Twinkie mixes with thick green bile, a liquid that surrounds and emulsifies the fat in the tasty treat, just like liquid dish detergent breaks down fat when you're washing dishes. (By making fat soluble in water, bile lets you digest food more efficiently ... great stuff.) The liver produces the bile that the gall bladder stores between food arrivals and squirts when it senses food. The liver also serves as a central clearing house by receiving nutrients and toxins, sorting them, detoxifying them as needed, then shipping the nutrients to different parts of the body for use as energy. The complex vascular system transports those nutrients from the food and delivers them to your body's major organs. And once the small intestine has done its sorting job, and has decided what to pull out for the various functions, it pushes forward what it has no use for, on into the *cecum*.

What gets pulled out where? Well, in the first part of the small intestine (the *duodenum*), calcium, magnesium, iron, fat-soluble vitamins A and D, and glucose are absorbed. Then, in the middle part (the *jejunum*), fat, sucrose, lactose, glucose, proteins, amino acids, fat-soluble vitamins A and D, and water-soluble vitamins like folic acid are absorbed. That's where our Twinkie contributes all that great fat and sugar content. And lastly, in the *ileum*, the last part of the small intestine before reaching the large intestine, proteins, amino acids, water-soluble vitamins like folic acid, and vitamin B12 are absorbed. (HmMMM, wonder if you got anything other than fat and sugar from Mr. Twinkie ... By the way, did you know that President Clinton put one in a time capsule? And that 500 million are sold every year? Wow, how scary is *that*?)

The large intestine, or colon: The *cecum* is a little reservoir at the start of the large intestine that holds the fluid it gets from the small intestine. As this liquid moves through the large intestine, and as the large intestine sucks fluid back into your body through the intestine walls, whatever matter your small intestine didn't take from the Twinkie becomes more solid. (Besides water, the walls of the large intestine also absorb potassium and sodium chloride.) This matter joins other waste and becomes feces. As feces gets harder and harder, it moves down to the rectum at the end of your digestive system, where it exits your body when you finally relax your sphincter muscle. Bye-bye, Twinkie.

So, Who Cares?

We *should*. Why, you ask?

Well, in a perfectly healthy body, this entire process could take place in as few as four hours, although eight hours is more typical. But in less-than-perfect cases (and who eats perfectly?) waste in the digestive tract can slow down and putrify. This gives the toxins that were being moved through the body the time to be reabsorbed, or else simply to accumulate and cause the process to become even more sluggish and less efficient.

Besides that, we also know that food pulls over at various points along the digestive tract to be absorbed. That means that any disease in any of these areas can cause nutritional deficiencies. But disease isn't the only nutrient thief: any accumulated, backed-up matter that makes it harder for your body to absorb nutrients can do the same. It's bad enough that our food has far fewer nutrients today than it used to when it was grown or raised locally; now the refuse in our bodies makes it difficult to absorb even those few nutrients that still remain. No more Twinkies ...

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