



# SPRING CLEANING

## For Happy, Healthy Kids!

### The top six ways to spring clean your body

By Loraine Rushton

**MOST** of us think of cleaning our homes, our cupboards and closets, but it's more important to clean out our bodies when it comes to springtime. This is especially important for kids to avoid the typical springtime ailments such as hay fever, asthma, breathing difficulties and flus. Too often we think of these conditions as something that can't be avoided and we have to suffer through. Over the years, I have worked with countless children and teens and through a combination of nutrition and yoga therapy have watched each malady disappear. To them and their parents it appears as a miracle, when in fact, it's simply preparing the body for the transition of spring. So, to keep a spring in your step, here are my top five ways to spring clean your body. I invite you to take this on as a family and enjoy the increased energy levels and lightness of spring.

#### 1. Twisting

Twists are fabulous for helping to squeeze out the liver and function correctly.

#### 2. Roly Poly Bear

Ask your child to lie down on their back with their hands interlaced behind their head and knees bent. Tell them to squeeze their knees together as they exhale and drop their knees side to side. Tell them, "imagine you are a bear who has been hibernating in winter and you are slowly waking up."

#### 3. Windscreen Wiper

Starting from lying on their back with their arms out to the sides in airplane arms and palms pushing down, tell your child to flex their feet and pull their chin down. They lift one leg and as they breathe out, swing it across the body and out to the side like a windscreen wiper washing the car windows.

#### 4. Cobra Twists

Nothing beats cobra for stretching open the belly and by adding a twist we give the liver a good cleansing squeeze. From Cobra, ask them to "look over your shoulder. Can you see your feet?"

Kids love to visualise looking behind at the flowers, grass, insects, or other imaginary animals, all of which they can hiss at!

#### 5. Rocket

Tell your child to sit with their legs out wide. They slide a hand down one leg until they can grab hold of an ankle or foot. Bringing the other arm overhead into a side stretch we count down from 10 to zero. The fun is blasting off to the other side.

#### 6. Seated twist

Staying in the same position and keeping the legs wide, tell them to exhale and twist around to the side and smell the flowers, grass or say hello to the insects they visualised earlier.

Spring is a time of awakening and rebirth and it is the time to create for the future. A beautiful exercise to do to create for the upcoming year is to plant a seed and ask your child to visualise a wish they hope for the year. As they plant the seed they also plant their desire. The magic is in watching it grow as their wish also unfolds.

### JOGGLING: Get up, get out, get moving.

To kick-start the body's cleansing process in spring, start the morning with a joggle. What is a joggle you may be asking? It is a slow bouncing jog, which also helps the digestive organs, increases circulation and respiration. An alternative would be a few rounds of faster paced sun salutes and done with song, makes it more fun for younger kids.

#### Foods To Avoid

Two foods that contribute to the problems of spring are sugar and dairy. Dairy tends to clog the system and create excess mucous and exacerbates any respiratory difficulties. Sugar, as we are leaning more and more, is simply toxic and you don't put toxins in while you are cleaning them out.

#### Foods To Increase

The organ most responsible for cleaning the body in spring is the liver. To nourish the liver and keep it clean while it is cleaning you, some of the best foods are leafy greens, such as bok choy, kale, collard greens, mustard greens, pak choy and Chinese cabbage. Steam them, boil them, fry and juice them. I even have a friend who makes kale icy pops for her four-year-old and he eats them like they are ice cream!

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