

DETOX:

PUT DOWN THE CARROT JUICE

January is a time when many of us feel we should cleanse our bodies, but will detoxing *really* make you healthier?

Detoxing is as much part and parcel of January as overindulgence is of Christmas. 'If you've been overdoing it, there is a natural desire to cleanse your system,' says Jane Scrivner, author of *Detox Yourself* (£8.99, Piatkus). And nowadays there have never been so many products on the market to help us do just that, from 'how to' books full of complicated juice plans, to foot patches that claim to draw out toxins as you sleep. All make similar claims, though – to expel the build-up of toxins that can lead to health issues like headaches, fatigue, skin problems, aches and pains, bloating, weight gain and cellulite.

'You take in toxins all the time, mainly through processed food, antibiotics, pesticides and preservatives. But as your body can't digest these, it has to eliminate them,' explains immunologist Dr Dirk Budka (www.immuneclinicbndon.com). 'Taking in too many toxins can put a big strain on the body, making you feel tired and generally unwell. Detoxification can also help the pancreas and small and large intestines become more efficient. The result can be relief from IBS symptoms, fatigue and skin problems,' he adds.

NO SCIENCE

But it's no secret that most medical professionals think detox programmes and products are at best a waste of time and money, and at worst, potentially dangerous. 'The body is very efficient at removing toxins – it does so all the time on its own,' explains state-registered dietician Helen Bond. 'There's really no need to do anything special.' And it's not true that detox diets help to support digestion, says Dr Paul Illing, registered toxicologist and spokesperson for Sense About Science (www.senseaboutscience.org.uk). 'Your body's natural processes are effective at clearing out any harmful

