

The Purification Rundown

<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~dst/Narconon/detox.htm>

By far the most contentious element of the Narconon programme is the New Life Detoxification Program, Narconon's equivalent of the Scientology Purification Rundown. This uses a combination of exercise (preferably running), lengthy periods in a sauna and massive doses of vitamins and nutritional supplements, notably niacin and oils. This is supposed to drive "stored" drugs out of body fat but there is little convincing evidence that it actually does this, or that it is even possible to do what it is supposed to do. More worryingly, there is strong evidence that all three elements are potentially or actually risky.

- Running may not be safe for all, particularly those with weak hearts (perhaps weakened by drug abuse).
- Sauna periods are far beyond what is recommended as safe. Ordinarily, one is strongly advised not to stay in a sauna for longer than about 15-30 minutes. Narconon's clients stay in the sauna for up to five hours at temperatures of up to 80C (170F), ten times longer than the recommended maximum. This poses major risks for health; such a lengthy period of extreme heat can easily lead to hypothermia, heat exhaustion, salt or potassium depletion, heat stroke and breathing difficulties, which could prove highly dangerous for asthma sufferers. Indeed, Hubbard's book *Clear Body Clear Mind*, upon which the programme is based and which the supervisors are required to study, includes a list of actions to be taken in the case of overheating, salt or potassium depletion or heat stroke. Such risks would be far less likely if the use of the sauna was not so excessive. It is for this reason that the Californian government's Department of Industrial Relations has declared the use of the Hubbard method to be "inappropriate" for dealing with occupational asthma. See <http://www.dir.ca.gov/imc/asthma.html>
- Vitamin "bombs" risk poisoning their users. The State of Oklahoma's examiners reported in 1991 that "The use of high amounts of vitamins and minerals in the amounts described administered by Narconon can be potentially dangerous to the patients of Narconon according to the more credible medical evidence ..." Many of the dosages set by Hubbard far exceed the recommended maximum intakes set by the United States Institute of Medicine's Food and Nutrition Board (FNB). Typically, Hubbard's dosages have not been amended for decades, despite the advance of medical and scientific knowledge; the Scientologists are required (by Hubbard's own instructions) not to alter his doctrines, even where they conflict with proven science. The Food and Nutrition Board is responsible for setting recommended dietary allowances (RDAs) and upper limits (ULs), the maximum level of daily nutrient intake that is likely to pose no risk of adverse effects. In almost every single case, Hubbard recommends dosages well above the safe limits, in some cases as much as 142 times more than the toxic level. The side effects of such huge overdoses range from liver damage, hair loss, brain swelling and nausea up to fatal heart and respiratory failure. The following table shows the levels recommended by Hubbard and the FNB, and the proven consequences of dosages beyond the FNB's upper limits.

Vitamins

NIACIN			
Dosages	Hubbard	RDA *	Upper limit
	100mg-5,000mg	14 mg	* 35 mg

Adverse effects of overdose Overdoses of Niacin can be extremely dangerous:

At doses of over 50mg, niacin (nicotinic acid) may cause transient itching, flushing, tingling, or headache. Niacinamide in the form that occurs naturally in the body (nicotinamide) is free of these effects. Large doses of niacin may cause nausea and may aggravate a peptic ulcer. Side effects may be reduced by taking the drug on a full stomach. At doses of over 2g daily (which have been used to treat hyperlipidaemia) there is a risk of gout, liver damage, and high blood sugar levels, leading to extreme thirst.

[John A. Henry, *British Medical Association New Guide to Medicines and Drugs*, 2000 edition]

Hubbard completely misunderstood what niacin does to the body - an issue explored more fully in "[Hubbard's Junk Science](#)" - and deprecated nicotinamide as "worthless" because it did not produce the symptoms which he misinterpreted as being desirable indicators.

* *daily dosage, adult males & females*

VITAMIN A

Dosages	Hubbard	RDA *	Upper limit *
	5,000 IU - 50,000 IU	700-900 µg	3,000 µg

Adverse effects of overdose Excessive intake of vitamin A is toxic, at dosages of around 20-25,000 IU daily. The symptoms include brain swelling, weakened bones, conjunctivitis, cirrhosis of the liver, hair loss, diarrhoea, insomnia and fever.

** daily dosage, adult males & females*

VITAMIN C

Dosages	Hubbard	RDA *	Upper limit *
	250-1,000mg - 5,000-6,000mg	75-90 mg	2000 mg

Adverse effects of overdose Gastrointestinal disturbances, kidney stones, excess iron absorption.

** daily dosage, adult males & females*

VITAMIN D

Dosages	Hubbard	RDA *	Upper limit *
	400-2000 IU	5-15 µg	50 µg

Adverse effects of overdose Disturbance of calcium metabolism, producing hypercalcaemia - i.e. dangerously raised blood calcium concentrations leading to raised blood pressure, the possibility of brain damage, and kidney damage.

** daily dosage, adult males & females*

VITAMIN E

Dosages	Hubbard	RDA *	Upper limit *
	800 IU - 2,400 IU	15 mg	1,000 mg

Adverse effects of overdose May include hemorrhagic toxicity.

** daily dosage, adult males & females*

Data from Hubbard, *Clear Body Clear Mind*, and United States Food and Nutrition Board, "Dietary Reference Intakes: Vitamins",
<[http://www.iom.edu/iom/iomhome.nsf/WFiles/webtablevitamins/\\$file/webtablevitamins.pdf](http://www.iom.edu/iom/iomhome.nsf/WFiles/webtablevitamins/$file/webtablevitamins.pdf)>]

Minerals

CALCIUM

Dosages	Hubbard 500-3000 mg	RDA * 1,000-1,300 mg	Upper limit * 2,500 mg
----------------	-------------------------------	-----------------------------------	-------------------------------------

Adverse effects of overdose Kidney stones, hypercalcemia, milk alkali syndrome, renal insufficiency, constipation, palpitations, reduced iron and zinc absorption.

** daily dosage, adult males & females*

COPPER

Dosages	Hubbard 2-12 mg	RDA * 0.9 mg	Upper limit * 10 mg
----------------	---------------------------	------------------------	----------------------------------

Adverse effects of overdose Gastrointestinal distress, liver and kidney damage, destruction of red blood cells (haemolytic anaemia).

** daily dosage, adult males & females*

IRON

Dosages	Hubbard 18-108 mg	RDA * 9-18 mg	Upper limit * 45 mg
----------------	-----------------------------	-------------------------	----------------------------------

Adverse effects of overdose Gastrointestinal distress, significantly raised risk of heart disease, diabetes and cancer.

** daily dosage, adult males & females*

MAGNESIUM

Dosages	Hubbard 250-1500 mg	RDA * 310-420 mg	Upper limit * 350 mg
----------------	-------------------------------	----------------------------	-----------------------------------

Adverse effects of overdose Adverse effects rare, but can occur in people with impaired kidney functions. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, dizziness, muscle weakness. Very large increases can cause fatal respiratory or heart failure.

** daily dosage, adult males & females*

MANGANESE

Dosages	Hubbard	RDA *	Upper limit *
	4-24 mg	1.8-2.3 mg	11 mg

Adverse effects of overdose Elevated blood concentration and neurotoxicity, producing Parkinson's-like symptoms. Individuals with cirrhosis (liver damage), such as alcoholics, may not be able to properly excrete manganese. Manganese supplements can also cause severe hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) in diabetics.

** daily dosage, adult males & females*

ZINC

Dosages	Hubbard	RDA *	Upper limit *
	15-90 mg	8-11 mg	40 mg

Adverse effects of overdose Affects metabolism of iron and copper, leading to nausea, vomiting, fever.

** daily dosage, adult males & females*

Data from Hubbard, *Clear Body Clear Mind*, and United States Food and Nutrition Board, "Dietary Reference Intakes: Minerals", [http://www.iom.edu/iom/iomhome.nsf/WFiles/webtablevitamins/\\$file/webtableminerals.pdf](http://www.iom.edu/iom/iomhome.nsf/WFiles/webtablevitamins/$file/webtableminerals.pdf)