

## **Our Comments to the You/Huisgenoot 26 Feb 2009 Article Headed: “Detox Claims –Such a Con”**

We were shocked to be confronted with the article in You/Huisgenoot of the 26 February 2009 edition and have taken legal steps and approached The South African Press Council to counter these biased, controversial, and above all untrue claims.

Please note that we were not given an opportunity to provide our perspective and point of view even though we requested it.

We also note that the article omits a lot of relevant information and research and only interviews conventional doctors with no training in integrative medicine.

The quoted article is in italics we have added numbers for ease of reference.

### **1. *“DETOX CLAIMS - SUCH A CON ”***

This is a sensational, inflammatory, derogatory and unfounded statement. The word con implies being dishonest and a swindler. The Fountainhead has always acted out of integrity.

2. The Fountainhead advert is included in small in the bottom left hand corner of page 28 the name in the logo is blurred out – but customers will recognize the logo and Fountainhead products. Are our Nutritive Body Lotion, Healing Bath Salts, Upliftment Spray and CardioFlow which are also in this ad at fault like the detox patches that they are slurring? The only reason that Media 24 have this ad is because the Fountainhead have used this ad to advertise with them in both the You/Huisgenoot and Readers Digest at a huge cost. They take advertisers money with one hand and stab them in the back with the other – great ubuntu! If they are so against these products why take their money in the first place?

Furthermore it now seems that every derogatory comment made about detox patches is aimed at us even if it the comment doesn't really refer to our patches.

The Fountainhead cannot comment about foot spas but can comment on Fountainhead Detox Patches and detoxification.

### **3. *The Manufacturers of foot spas and detox plasters – there are at least eight in SA – want people to believe that the body is like a giant magnet that attracts toxins.***

The Fountainhead have never made such a statement anywhere and doubt that any other detox patch marketers have done.

### **4. *Their argument is that your body's natural defences aren't adequate to detoxify your colon, liver, kidneys and lymphatic system and you need help getting rid of surplus poisons –***

Correct. All homeopaths, and allied health professions recommend supporting the body in detoxification as part of their treatment protocol because we have more toxins in our environment today than ever before and a detox regimen has proven to assist the body on its way back to balance (homeostasis), and good health. More on this later.

### **5. *When you put a detox plaster on your foot at night it's white – and when you remove it the next morning it's brown and has a bad smell, supposedly as a result of toxins that have been removed from your body.***

The Fountainhead does not say anything about the smell of patches anywhere. We believe that some makes of detox patches that do have a strong smell have not been filtered properly and still

have the smell of the wood vinegar. The Fountainhead patches have a clean eucalyptus smell. However, customers such as heavy smokers that have used detox patches have said that their patches may smell like tar after being on the feet all night and having absorbed the perspiration and toxins that may be present in the sweat. If you rub garlic on your feet you can taste it in your mouth 20 minutes later, so smell does travel through the body.

Yes, the patches do turn colour from white/cream to brown when perspiration has been released from the sweat glands under the foot and into the patches. The skin is one of the body's biggest detoxification organs and under the feet there are more sweat glands per square centimetre than anywhere else on the body and thus once one has perspired into the patch it does turn brown indicating that one has perspired and thus body toxins (minerals, lactate, urea - a waste product from the break-down of protein) have been released by the body into the patch.

**6. Manufacturers say tourmaline and wood vinegar in the plasters cause a “resonance in the body that vibrates at the same frequency as water and this has a stabilizing and cleansing effect”. The negative ions’ “Far Infra Red Rays” cause a reflex that stimulates blood circulation, resulting in “homeostatic balance”, according to one advertisement.**

***This is said to relieve stress, improve brain function, boost the immune system and help with arthritis and insomnia.***

Tourmaline which is a mineral and wood vinegar which also contains minerals emits what is known as far infra red rays. There is much research and many products that use far infra red rays for healing.

Tourmaline is the only one mineral to show permanent electricity on the earth and is also a natural (non-manufactured) source of negative ions and far infrared (FIR) rays. It is also known to be helpful for improving circulation, relieving stress, increasing mental alertness and strengthening the immune system function (Niwa Institute for Immunology, Japan. Int J. Biometeorol 1993 Sep; 37(3) 133-8).

The far infrared energy that Tourmaline naturally emits causes a resonance in the body at the same frequency as water. All matter is made up of uniquely arranged electrons and molecules all moving in unison. When molecules are illuminated with electromagnetic radiation of the same intrinsic vibration frequency as the substance itself, the electromagnetic wave energy is absorbed and the amplitude of that substance's molecular vibration is increased. That's why when FIR, having the same vibration frequency, illuminates a substance, that substance will filter out the FIR and experience a "resonance absorption." This is a process known as "resonance-absorption to heat-generation" with the aid of FIR.

The seventy-five percent of our bodies composed of water, protein, fat and other substances - all must function properly to sustain life. When living things absorb FIR of 8 to 14 micron wavelength, they experience resonance absorption. The vibrating movement of molecules in living tissue produces an increase in energy, which in turn activates cells and enhances metabolism.

Which is why whilst wearing detox patches after only 3 hours of the patches being on the feet there is an increase in blood circulation see the attached thermographic pictures. Annexure D See also the attached laboratory tests showing negative ions. Annexure E (sent in Email 2 due to size constraints in sending emails).

Negative ions are anti-oxidants as they attach to free radicals – positive ions that leech minerals from the body and cause damage and ageing. Increased blood circulation brings increased oxygen, nutrients and removes waste from tissues thereby promoting good health.

**7. The converted insist detox plasters cure just about any ailment, including serious conditions.**

If one has suffered from debilitating arthritis for years and after using a course of detox patches one can now get out of bed pain free in the morning, or one has been unable to sleep due to insomnia, or one has had chemo therapy and hasn't suffered as badly from the after effects as has been reported by customers to the Fountainhead then one would naturally be converted.

**8. *The list of poisons the plasters and foot spa are supposed to remove from your body includes benzine, alcohol, aluminium, copper, lead, mercury, arsenic and asbestos.***

No where, not on any sales information or internet information does The Fountainhead list these toxins as those being absorbed into the detox patch after use.

Medical research shows that there are metals/trace elements excreted in sweat, their concentration can vary fifteenfold) such as: zinc (0.4 mg/l), copper (0.3 - 0.8 mg/l), iron (1 mg/l), chromium (0.1 mg/l), nickel (0.05 mg/l), lead (0.05 mg/l).

**9. *Because the skin on your feet has so many sweat glands it releases the toxins more readily than any other part of your body. Or so the sales people tell you.***

It is a medical fact that the feet has one of the highest concentration of sweat glands on the body: Merocrine or eccrine sweat glands: are a type of sweat gland that is far more numerous and widely distributed than apocrine sweat glands, they are smaller than apocrine sweat glands. Your foot has 250,000 sweat glands. That's more sweat glands per centimetre of skin than anywhere else on your body.

**10. *Medical experts disagree. Skin specialists say it's extremely difficult for any substance to penetrate the skin. Much research has been done to find ways to administer medication through the skin and it's even harder for chemicals to seep through the skin from inside the body, says Professor Jeanette du Plessis, an internationally renowned pharmaceutical expert and head of North West University's medical research unit.***

The experts disagree. Many skin specialists use topically applied lotions to assist the skin's healing and thus agree that topical lotions do penetrate the skin. If toxins did not penetrate the skin there would be no legislation against certain toxic substances being used in products that have contact with the skin. Our delicate skin cells are quite permeable, and substances seep through our very being and end up in our blood stream with ease. Think of the nicotine patch or the hormone patch, or magnesium sulphate being absorbed through the skin and into our blood cells by taking a bath. Scientists now realize just how easy it is to filter and flow substances into our core. Some chemical-heavy careers, like construction, auto mechanics, dry cleaning, hospital work, or hair care involve skin exposure to chemicals that are known carcinogens.

Once again the test of rubbing garlic on one's foot and tasting it 20 minutes later in your mouth is a case in point.

**11. *"I haven't found evidence that a plaster can make toxins leave your body through the soles of your feet, which in any case has the thickest skin of any part of your body", she says.***

***If you wanted to expel chemicals in your body it would make more sense to do it where your skin is thinnest – such as behind your ears or on your forehead or genitalia, Cape Town dermatologist professor Jak Cilliers explains. To protect the soles of your feet the upper layer of the skin, the stratum corneum, consists of 15 to 20 layers of dead skin cells.***

As we have explained earlier the mechanism used is sweat glands and perspiration and thus the feet are the perfect body area on which to place detox plasters. The feet also contain reflexes, acupuncture points and meridians (energy channels) as stimulated in treatment by Therapeutic Reflexology and Traditional Chinese Medicine, both well researched and are South African Allied

Health Professions. If one places a detox patch on the thickest part of your foot – the heel, one still perspires and turns the patch brown, hence the thickness of the skin is not a factor.

**12. When you sweat you lose mostly water – very few other substances leave your body through the skin.**

As mentioned before many other substances are carried away in perspiration and there is much research on this. Doctors interested in integrative medicine are aware of skin being part of the detox process.

**13. If you had such a high concentration of toxins such as arsenic, lead and mercury in your body that they escaped through the soles of your feet you'd be so badly poisoned you'd be dead, says Dr Gerbus Muller, a toxicologist at Stellenbosch University's department of pharmacology.**

What high concentrations of toxins? Who mentions quantities? A small amount of toxins in the body can lead to many debilitating symptoms one need not be dying, such as: bad breath, abdominal bloating, constipation, fatigue, intolerance to certain foods, headaches, bad skin, cellulite, gallstones, etc well documented by experts.

**14. One of the substances the plasters are said to draw from your feet is asbestos – and that is physically impossible, Dr Muller says, because there is no way asbestos fibres can move through your body to your feet.**

Once again The Fountainhead have never made the above claim anywhere.

**15. "The discharge of poisons and trace elements through sweat and saliva is so minimal that medically speaking it's of no consequence," he explains.**

Note that he is agreeing here that poisons are released through sweat. The body functions perfectly and if it were of no consequence to release poisons in sweat then surely it wouldn't do so. Many doctors, homeopaths and allied health professionals will disagree with his statement. So will those who have had a major improvement in their well being through assisted detoxification processes.

**16. "Your body rids itself of unwelcome substances through the liver, which changes the chemical structure of those materials so your kidneys can remove the impurities from your blood and expel them through your Urine and faeces. He believes that the idea that it's possible, or desirable to detox your body is a con.**

**To think you can cleanse yourself using detox plasters or foot spas is a myth. You simply can't boost the body's purification process that way."**

Our body is designed to utilize natural substances which include foods, herbs and phytochemicals. Any foreign substance will serve as a stimulus to our immune system, which has the function of removing these substances. Although the toxicity of a chemical may vary, it is the job of the liver to reduce toxins into compounds that the body can safely handle and eliminate through the kidneys (as urine), skin (as sweat), lungs (as expelled air) and bowels (as faeces). Maintaining and enhancing these eliminative organs in good working order is essential for one's good health to continue.

The efficiency of the detoxifying organs is not the same in everybody but is dependant on factors such as gender, genetics, lifestyle and the environment the human lives in. Women, for instance, seem to be more vulnerable to the so called endocrine disruptors, the chemicals in the environment that act as hormones. In addition, all our detoxifying enzymes are dependant on certain co-factors for their proper functioning, mostly vitamins, minerals and trace elements. If the diet is poor in these, or there is a deficiency for another reason, the enzyme systems cannot work

properly and more toxins will be stored in the connective tissue, instead of being eliminated through the various organs as mentioned above.

Because of the environment we all live in, the human body does require “aid” to detoxify because it can find itself in an environment of “toxin overload”. This is particularly true in urban areas (e.g. shopping centers with sometimes poor ventilation, over reliance on fast food intakes etc.) There are different influences on detoxifying ability. As a result, there are categories of humans that require “aid” to detoxify at a greater or lesser degree than others, despite the fact that the organs of the human body do carry out the function of detoxification. Therefore one cannot fairly call detox a con.

The Fountainhead has a customer called Dr Helena Alvez head of the Johannesburg Hospital Emergency Unit that has used Fountainhead Chi Detox Patches on chemo patients and noticed a marked improvement in their recovery after treatment using Fountainhead detox patches.

***17. Dr Muller is convinced the fact that many people claim the plasters and foot spas have helped them is due to the placebo effect – your brain tells you you’re feeling better even if the treatment or medication is fake and doesn’t have any healing effect.***

That is an unscientific statement. It needs to be noted that most remedies are discovered through anecdotal evidence and experiment and that does not necessarily mean that it works because of a placebo effect.

***18. “Many alternative medicines are aimed at ailments that don’t have easily identifiable causes or can’t be measured, such as aches, inflammation and exhaustion.”  
“The brain is a very powerful organ. If you use something you believe will make you feel better you probably will feel better.”***

The fact that you can feel them means that you can measure them, it can be a bad headache or a mild headache. The above is nonsensical. It sounds like he is trying to dismiss the fact that many people have been assisted by using these detox products and he doesn’t want to explain it in any other way.

***19. Because the plasters and the water in the foot spas change colour and sometimes smell bad many consumers believe these products do remove toxins from the body. The easiest way to determine whether this is really the case is to perform a simple experiment: put one plaster on your foot, immerse another plaster in water and leave both overnight. The next morning both will be the same brown colour, even the one that wasn’t in contact in your skin. Carbohydrates in the starch content of the plaster cause it to get sticky and develop a bad smell.***

This is a bit of a pseudo science experiment! The fact that the patch turns brown - simply means that you have perspired into the patch and thus the liquid of the perspiration together with the toxins eliminated through perspiration turns the patch brown. Of-course if you place the patch under water it will also turn colour – how absurd! However, if you haven’t put the patch on properly, or haven’t perspired the patch will not change colour.

***20. In April last year the American TV network ABC broadcast an insert exposing these products in the show 20/20. The manufacturers of the detox plasters and foot spas, who were invited to take part in the programme, refused to be interviewed and couldn’t supply any scientific proof their products work.***

This statement is highly irregular how can we comment on a show we never saw and we don’t know what products they are referring to. The Fountainhead is very happy to respond and show

proof and has sent reams of information to the writer Ms Booyens. Who has decided to write a sensational article rather than a fair one.

**21. When plasters worn by eight volunteers were tested none of them showed any significant amount of heavy metals or toxins.**

Who determines what is significant? Small amounts of toxins in the body are shown to cause a range of debilitating symptoms as mentioned earlier. Although again we do not have details of this research.

**22. Kinoki, one of America's biggest manufacturers of detox plasters, is currently facing several legal actions regarding "misleading and false" claims in its advertisements and accusations it abuses the American Food and Drug Administration's Stamp of approval.**

Kinoki is not sold in South Africa. We don't know what their claims are and so why include them? It seems as if it is for no other reasons than to implicate our local companies as being similar in integrity?

**23. South African companies also misuse this stamp because detox plasters aren't considered medicine and aren't FDA tested for efficacy.**

The Fountainhead detox patches were initially launched as FDA certified as safe for human use and have subsequently received a national drug code from the US and they have confirmed with us that our medical device listing is valid:

Chi Detox Patches – Reg No: 34690-1001-1

Heat Detox Patches – Reg No: 34690-2001-1

**24. The manufacturers of detox plasters and foot spas have endless documentation of tests they've carried out and explanations of how their products work in theory. But when you take a closer look you see that most of the tests aren't to determine whether the products work but whether they're safe for human use and are in fact made of the chemicals and substances the manufacturers claim.**

When applying for FDA certification and NDC registration the manufacturer has to comply to many rigid standards, particularly human safety so there are a huge amount of safety tests done as well. By the way all this test cost a fortune! This should be a good point rather than disparaging.

**25. None of these test results has ever been published in an authoritative scientific journal.**

One can wait years to have research reviewed by peers and published this does not however, mean that research that is unpublished is invalid.

**26. Ironically, none of the manufacturers has spent a cent on relatively simple tests that would determine whether the products remove toxins from the body.**

The Fountainhead's manufacturer has spent millions of rands on doing various tests on the products in both the US and Korea by FDA certified laboratories which is why The Fountainhead pays a premium for their product. South African laboratories are not set up to do tests on detox patches. The Fountainhead did contact many laboratories such as: The National Health Laboratory Service, *Medical Laboratories SANAS - South African National Accreditation System*, M&L Laboratories, and CSIR Laboratories – Pretoria. None of whom could do tests on the detox patches.

**27. All it would entail is for a qualified scientist to test the toxin levels of a representative group of people before using the plasters or foot spas, and test again afterwards to see whether toxins had been removed.**

It is not that simple, there are many rules and logistics to adhere to when doing clinical research in order for it to be valid otherwise magazines such as this one will not be satisfied. The importers of detox patch companies are not huge pharmaceutical companies with loads of funds to put into research which is why we rely on the manufacturer's research as they sell millions and do have the funds to do research. The Fountainhead patches have gone through rigorous tests for the FDA, for the CE - this is a European mark of quality as well as the ISO International standards and so we are satisfied.

**28. Judging by the way South Africa's Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) has dealt with the complaints it's not equipped to separate the chaff from the wheat.**

***When Dr Harris Steinman of Cape Town laid a complaint about improbable claims made by the manufacturers of detox plasters in their adverts the ASA rejected it, based on the opinion of just one homeopath, Dr Frederic Motz. Dr Motz has no conventional training and has never published an article in a recognized scientific journal, yet the ASA accepted him as an "independent, credible expert"***

The Advertising Standards Authority are now deemed incapable? The claims mentioned were not against the Fountainhead. However, Dr Frederic Motz is a registered practitioner in Osteopathy, Acupuncture, Homeopathy, Ayurvedic Medicine, Naturopathy and Health Profiling with a specific interest in complimentary medicines, Integrated Preventative Medicine and natural-ingredient products, with a number of years experience in the field. As such the ASA found him qualified to express an opinion in the particular field in the issues/complaints that have were raised. The implication by You/Huisegenoot that homeopaths are not qualified to answer a detox related issue as they have not received conventional training is an outrage!

The ASA did not only rely on Dr Motz's evidence but also received examples of literature to support that the skin does assist in detoxification, as stated by Dr Alta Smit, Chairperson of The Homotoxicology Association, MB ChB (Wits), BSc Physio (UOFS), MF Hom (UK).

**29. "It doesn't help to have someone who practises alternative or complementary medicine evaluate such claims," says professor Marjanne Senekal of the department of human biology at the University of Cape Town.**

When I asked Dr Brom, a practicing doctor trained in both conventional medicine and homeopathy and the editor of The South African Journal of Natural Medicine he said: "The conventional mind set is so entrenched that it is very difficult to change it . The concept of detoxification has been well described in thousands of books. It is entirely unfair to ask doctors who have no clue about Integrative medicine to make a comment on the plasters. Conventional doctors treat disease and Integrative doctors support health as a priority and only treat disease if necessary. In supporting health the whole concept of detox is absolutely primary and very few conventional doctors know anything about detox so how can they possibly comment on this process."

It is therefore a huge insult to the doctor and field of integrative medicine that a doctor practicing integrative medicine such as Dr Motz should not be able to comment on detoxification when they are in fact more qualified to do so.

**A final Note:**

The article does not mention the benefits of increased blood circulation, stimulation of reflexes, acupuncture points or meridians. What Far Infra Red technology is or what negative ions are. That Traditional Chinese Medicine is an ancient, well documented system of health recorded long

before conventional medicine and that in this system it is believed that toxins go downwards in the body towards the feet. The journalist does not interview any doctors who work with detoxing protocols to promote health. They do not interview any of the many, many people who have benefited from using detox patches.