



HOW THE HEALTH OF OUR COLON AFFECTS OUR TOTAL HEALTH

Anatomy of the colon

The colon is a tube approximately 5 feet long and 2½ inches in diameter. A healthy colon has uniform size and muscle tone. It extends from the cecum, where it is joined to the small intestine in the lower right side of the abdomen, up and across the abdominal cavity and down the left side of the body until it reaches the sigmoid and rectum. The three main functions of the colon are: final digestion of our food, the elimination of digestive residue, and the discharge of toxins and wastes from our body.

Consequences of poor colon health

We experience better health and well-being when the colon is clean and functioning normally. When the colon is congested with stagnant wastes, poisons back up into our system and pollute the inner environment. This is called auto-intoxication which literally means “self-poisoning”. All the body’s tissues are affected by the auto-intoxication. Some of the contributing factors to auto-intoxication and bowel problems are *improper diet consisting of refined food, insufficient exercise, stress, overeating, and ignoring the “call of nature.”* Incompletely digested food ferments and putrefies when remaining in the colon longer than a day. This fermented waste combines with the body’s own bile acids from the liver, resulting in auto-intoxication.

Signs of elimination dysfunction

Constipation is one of the first signs indicating to us that the bowel is not functioning properly. When a person is constipated, the walls of the colon are often encrusted with fecal matter. The inner diameter of the colon is reduced like a water pipe blocked by mineral deposits. Eventually the opening becomes narrower and narrower making it more difficult to pass waste through. Since the encrusted feces line the colon wall, the colon is unable to absorb nutrients from our food in the last phase of digestion. Wastes from the blood stream, which are normally drawn into the colon through the colon walls, are reabsorbed by the body along with other toxins resulting from fermentation and putrefaction of incompletely digested food. Subsequently, intestinal stasis often follows. This occurs when the muscular contractions known as peristalsis can no longer sweep the hardened feces along the digestive canal. A person can even have several bowel movements a day and still be constipated. With this type of constipation, the movements are usually smaller and occur more often because the inner diameter of the colon is smaller than it should be. The body reacts to this constricted bowel by stepping up the frequency of the peristaltic wave action to allow the waste to exit the body. Taken to its limit, the effect can be diarrhea, which is when the body moves out the waste so fast the bowel doesn’t have time to remove the water and minerals and consolidate the waste into stool.

How to prevent worsening of this dysfunction

We are all exposed to toxins daily; it is important to lighten the body’s load. Yellowstone Naturopathic Clinic doctors suggest a structured detoxification program for the working person that provides all the nutrients needed for total detoxification. Offered seasonally, meal replacements for breakfast and lunch are included. Segments of the detox cover food intake, tissue cleansing techniques (including colon hydrotherapy), and breathing exercises.

What is a colonic irrigation or colon hydrotherapy?

Colon Hydrotherapy or colonic irrigation has been used for centuries to maintain health, as an adjunct to religious practice and a component of fasting / cleansing / detox programs. A colonic irrigation, using the Wood Gravitational System, is an internal bath that helps cleanse the colon of poisons, gas, and accumulated fecal matter. Unlike an enema, it does not require the retention of water. There is minimal discomfort and internal pressure; just a steady gentle flow in and out of the colon. If indicated, a gentle abdominal massage is given to stimulate the colon to recover its natural shape, tone, and peristaltic wave action.

How is colon hydrotherapy administered?

A person receiving a colonic lies on a table 18 inches below the temperature-controlled input water holding tank. ***During the therapy, the person is dressed in an exam gown and is well covered for modesty and warmth.*** Warm socks, an eye pillow, and a warm pack for the abdomen are also provided for comfort. Relaxing music is playing in the background. A sterile speculum is carefully inserted into the rectum. Under constant and direct control of the therapist, a gentle stream of water flows into the colon via a small water tube and out the evacuation tube. Impacted feces and mucous flow out the evacuation tube along with the expelled water. As the water flows out of the colon, the practitioner gently massages the abdomen as needed to help the colon release its contents. It is possible to see this expelled waste matter when it passes through the clear portion of the evacuation tube.

How many colonics do I need?

The number of treatments will always vary with the individual and his/her condition. Often the waste is so hard and well-lodged in the colon that it may take a series of colonics to sufficiently hydrate, soften and loosen this accumulated fecal material. Some people may not have startling results for the first few treatments. Experience has shown positive changes at the third and fourth colonic. Colonic irrigation is most effective when employed in combination with exercise and the proper diet of non-mucous-producing foods (meat, dairy, and processed flour tend to produce mucous). Fresh fruits, vegetables, and certain herbs are suggested to help loosen and dissolve accumulated fecal matter. Adequate water intake is also advised. Proper chewing of your foods is of utmost importance. *At Yellowstone Naturopathic Clinic we generally recommend colonics in conjunction with a detoxification program. Check with your doctor as to the suggested number of colonics to obtain your goals of better health.*

What are the benefits of colonic irrigation?

Colonics offer relief from a variety of disturbances by cleansing the colon of impacted and putrefacted fecal matter. Fatigue, gas, headaches, irritability, skin problems, cold hands and feet, and lethargy are among the problems people have found relieved by colon cleansing. Your sense of well-being is often dramatically improved with colon irrigations. The body can again assimilate food in the colon and better defend itself against disease. Natural peristalsis, tone, and regularity are restored and many serious diseases may be averted through this gentle, sterile, scientific technique. Colonics are a key factor in the restoration of the body's natural balance or what we call good health.

Are there side effects of colonics?

There are none. It is not uncommon, however, for some people to experience flu-like symptoms, such as headaches. Toxins that have been lying dormant in the colon are now being flushed out and a small amount may be reabsorbed into the body's system. This healing crisis passes quickly and the person realizes a feeling of well-being with further treatments. *In conjunction with a Detox Program, these symptoms are minimized and may be relieved by a colonic.*

Will colonics damage the normal intestinal flora?

No. One of the functions of the first half of the colon is to gather intestinal flora needed for the colon. When the accumulation of feces in the bowel leads to fecal encrustation, it is difficult for the colon to function normally and the glands in this lining cannot produce the necessary intestinal flora. The resulting lack of lubrication intensifies a state of constipation and generates toxemia. This upsets the normal acid-alkaline balance and the growth of friendly bacteria is stunted. Cleansing the colon will help bring the acid-alkaline ratio back into balance. In this environment, the friendly bacteria will again thrive and disease causing bacteria will find it difficult to develop. *At Yellowstone Naturopathic Clinic, on the recommendation of the doctors, a special prepared colon implant of friendly bacteria is added to the final water to help your system regain balance.*

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