

In Depth: The Colon Cleanse

The ancient Egyptians believed that death started in the bowel and they drew upon the healing benefits of enemas to ward off illness and decay. Today, you can have cleansing enemas administered by a qualified naturopath.

Those who advocate the benefits of colonic irrigation, or colon hydrotherapy as it is also known, claim that the build-up of toxins in the bowel can lead to a large variety of health complaints, such as dizziness, lethargy, nausea and even serious conditions, such as cancer of the bowel.

The basic treatment is extremely simple. A nozzle is inserted a small distance into the patient's bowel then, depending on the particular type of remedy being administered, purified water, or a mixture of water, herbs and even coffee grounds, will be repeatedly flushed through the patient's bowel. The initial sensation is unusual to say the least!

Patients who have undergone this treatment sometimes describe the experience as feeling like a hot-water bottle filling up and then emptying out.

Under the watchful eye of the naturopath, the cleansing water is pumped in and out of the patient's colon. Occasionally, the naturopath will massage the patient's stomach to 'help things along'.

If the patient isn't squeamish, they can see exactly what those 'things' are. Most people, after they overcome their initial squeamishness, tend to find their insides fascinating. Though it's not exactly inner beauty, there's nothing quite like discovering one's inner truth!

Truth be told, there have been some pretty far-fetched stories about the kinds of things that have emerged from within some colonic patients; silver buttons, paperclips and even glass marbles swallowed as toddlers, now coaxed forth during the hydrotherapy.

After the therapy, many patients report positive side effects, such as clearer skin, more energy and a general sense of well-being. Many people describe the sensation as feeling 'lighter'. Presumably they don't float into the air straight away!

Most naturopaths recommend a series of treatments rather than a one-off session. One session isn't considered enough to dislodge the deep blockages.

In fact, for the best results, it's best to go on a cleansing diet before the hydrotherapy. Avoidance of difficult-to-digest foods, such as meat and bread, is highly recommended in the days leading up to the big flush.

As they say, you are what you eat, and now you can see what you eat too!