

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT COLON HYDROTHERAPY

by John Appleton

A buzz word that is heard frequently nowadays is detox. Health conscious people are becoming more and more aware of the need to remove toxic chemicals, heavy metals and pesticides from their bodies and thus many are investigating options for detoxification. Colon hydrotherapy is becoming increasingly popular as a means of achieving this. The colon (large intestine) is the end portion of the digestive tract. It is approx 1.6 metres long and approx 62 mms wide. The main functions of the colon are absorption of water and minerals, and the formation and elimination of fecal matter.

So what is colonic hydrotherapy and why should we be aware of it?

Very simply Colon hydrotherapy is an extended and more complete form of an enema and involves a gentle infusion of warm filtered water into the rectum to cleanse above the natural defecation area right up to the caecum where the colon joins the small intestine. Colonics are not a new therapy and the technique was recorded by the Egyptians in 1500 BC. The Chinese are believed to have used it long before then as did Ayurvedic medicine in India.



In the early 1900's Dr. John H. Kellogg M.D. (of cornflakes fame) extensively used colon therapy on some forty thousand of his patients. In a 1917 edition of the Journal of American Medical Association (JAMA) Dr. Kellogg reported that in over forty thousand gastrointestinal disease cases, he had used surgery in only twenty cases. The rest were helped as a result of cleansing the bowels, diet and exercise. Dr Joseph Waddington another advocate of colon hydrotherapy during the 1930's had this to say. "Abnormal functioning of the intestinal canal is the precursor of much ill-health, especially of chronic disease. Restoration of physiological intestinal elimination is often the important preliminary to eventual restoration of health in general".

Dr James Wiltsie who also practiced in the early part of last century said, "our knowledge of the normal and abnormal physiology of the colon and its pathology and management has not kept pace with that of many organ systems of the body. As long as we continue to assume the colon will take care of itself, we will remain in complete ignorance of perhaps the most important source of ill health in the whole body".

This brings us to what I believe is the most profound statement ever made regarding human health. A man called Hippocrates, regarded today as the father of medicine said 2,500 years ago – "ALL DISEASE BEGINS IN THE GUT". When we consider that approx 80% of our immune response is activated from our intestines the relevance of what Hippocrates said becomes very clear.

In England 1,000 people were questioned about their knowledge of the bowel and in particular bowel cancer. When asked which parts of the body could be affected by cancer only 10% included the bowel. When asked specifically if the bowel was a place you could get cancer only 43% said yes.

Given that colorectal cancer or bowel cancer is the second most common site of cancer for both men and women this is surprising. Another statistic that might be even more surprising – in New Zealand our supposedly clean green country, the incidence of colorectal cancer is the highest among developed nations with 1,100 deaths from the disease each year.

Why is this? There are undoubtedly many reasons but one that I am particularly concerned about relates to environmental toxins. We spray our pastures with tons of pesticides and herbicides, the cattle graze on the pastures and we eat the meat and drink the milk. The American Cancer Society has provided evidence in recent years which suggest that environmental agents, such as insecticides, herbicides, preservatives in food, hormones, antibiotics fed to livestock and petroleum by-products may play a greater role in the predisposition to colon cancer.

Putrefaction of animal protein in our colon due to incomplete digestion and compromised elimination is a real problem for most of us. When we add in the countless other toxic chemicals we breathe in and absorb through our skin it is not difficult to see how major problems can develop. Over time, fecal matter becomes impacted on the walls of the colon and in diverticular (small herniated pouches that protrude from the wall of the colon). Every toxin that we have come into contact with can be stored there, constantly being released back into the blood stream and on to the liver which is often struggling with the process of dealing with toxic prescription drugs. This is known as auto-intoxification. In Atlanta Georgia a woman having a colonic released a significant amount of barium. She was given barium as a 7 year old child 47 years earlier. Today even the average person could be storing up to 5 kgs of dried fecal matter in their colon - Ughh!!

Modern toilets have a lot answer for – as they have got progressively higher, efficient elimination of waste has become more difficult due to kinking of the sigmoid section of the colon (the last part before the rectum). While they can occur in other parts of the bowel, a British Study found that diverticula are most common in the sigmoid section. In western countries the presence of diverticula was estimated to affect 10% of people in the 1920s and today the figure is believed to be 50%. Diverticulitis is a condition that manifests when the diverticula become inflamed.

As you will see from the diagram below, every system and organ of the body is connected to the colon by reflex points. Dr Bernard Jensen in his famous "Guide To Better Bowel Care" talks about spending many years studying bowel reflex and he is well known for his explanation of Neural-arc reflex. *"By the second week of formation, the human embryo takes the shape of a primitive 'gut' tube and its nervous system begins to form. This means that the bowel tissue and nerve tissue are intimately related. By the 4th week, buds such as the lung bud and liver bud begin to bulge out from the gut and nerve tissue. By the 6th week most of the organs begin to form. These organs I noticed are covered with a membrane made up of the same tissue that formed the bowel and nerve tissue. That's when I realized that the tissue of the primitive gut surrounds each organ with a membrane.*

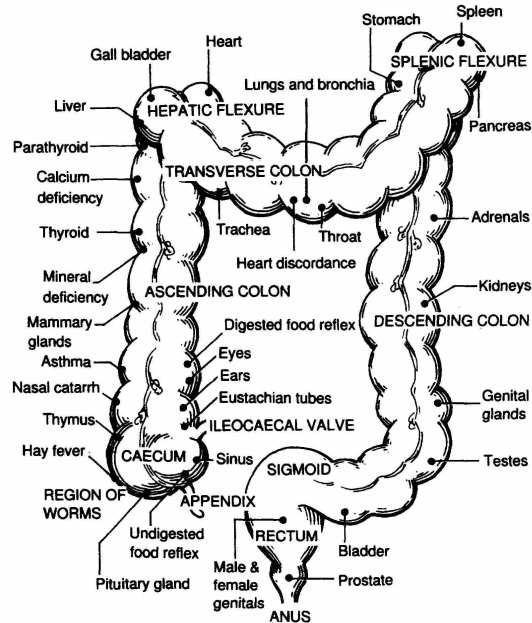
All of a sudden it came to me. This is how the genetic weaknesses of the mother and father are passed down to the children. Where the bowel has an inherent weakness, the organ that developed from that area of the bowel also has an inherent weakness". I was amazed when I first read this some years ago.

I hope that you are now beginning to understand just how important it is to have a healthy functioning colon. Very simply – an under-active colon full of toxic waste invites disease.

Today, as people look for alternatives to over prescribed, and often consequential drug therapy regimens, they are once again discovering the benefits of the natural alternative to maintaining a healthy and viable colon. I have had several colonics and as I am currently having my dental amalgams removed I have one after each dental session. Recently in Auckland a number of clinics specializing in colonic treatments have opened and we are fortunate to have one on the north shore. It's at the Milford Family Medical Centre 50 Beach Road Milford. It's called "Inside Health" and it's managed by Naturopath and Medical Herbalist Josee Lebel – Ph: 449-0006. On the city side, Sophie Wang operates the Colonic Health Centre in Pakuranga - Ph: 576-2630. Both Sophie and Josee have been trained in Australia and they use the latest FDA approved equipment. During a colonic treatment your dignity is maintained 100% of the time.

Colon hydrotherapy should not be seen as a cure all and there are people for whom it may not be appropriate. Every aspect of a treatment can be discussed with the therapist.

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Normal Colon. Sphincters and sacculations and their interrelation with anatomical centres and pathology.