# High Colonic Irrigation - Cosmopolitan Magazine

**Suppose you've jogged, dieted, gulped your vitamins,
yet still feel fagged out and frail.
This writer despaired of ever being jazzily vital, until she rediscovered
a decades-old method of releasing natural energy...**

*By Carol Signorella*

"Colonic what?!" I exclaimed.

"Colonic *irrigation*," Connie explained. "Like an internal bath to wash the poisons out of your system. You already know about all the unwanted food additives in our diets, and just think of the little extras not listed on the label. The pesticides sprayed on your fruit and vegetables, the hormones and antibiotics fed to your beef and poultry. And then, if you want to talk about pollution..."

"All right, Connie. So what happens when you're irrigated?"

"Simplicity itself. Water -- tap water, usually -- is slowly pumped into the colon, our large intestine."

"An enema." I shuddered.

"In a way. But more water -- an average of 25 to 30 gallons -- is used, and, under gentle pressure, it travels and cleanses the length of your colon, washing out all of the stale bile and putrefied waste poisoning your system. A colonic only takes an hour and is completely painless. You might even sleep too."

Hmmm, not likely, I thought. Still, I had to admit that Connie's appearance had certainly improved since the first colonic irrigation three months before. Her eyes, skin, and hair all glowed. In fact, its hard to describe Connie without making her sound like an ad for Short and Sassy.

That evening, on the subway (where I do most of my serious thinking), I tallied my complaints. Burning, itching eyes. Yellow, dull skin. Depression. Anxiety. Muddled head, uncoordinated body. Energy plummeted to dreary low. For years I've been busy trying out every possible cure for my persistent physical/emotional malaise: I'd jogged, quit smoking and drinking, added bran and dried fruit to my diet, even experimented with megavitamin therapy, but all to little avail. I remained dragged out, anxious, and definitely not my most vital self!

Why give up now? I thought. Maybe colonics could be a solution. Still, I wasn't going to let Connie talk me into anything without doing some independent research first. Naturally enough, I started with the American Medical Association -- they , however, were less than helpful: "the AMA," I was told, "has no definitive statement on colonic irrigation; we neither recommend them nor are against them." A trip to the library at Columbia University College for physicians and surgeons proved equally unenlightening; their latest text on colonic was a 1927 volume entitled "Troubles we don't talk about."

The first professional opinion I sought out also proved to be discouraging. My internist, Dr. Richard Nachtigall, who has a thriving Park Avenue practice, advised to me to forget colonics. "I can't see much use for these irrigations," he said. "I've never heard of any real proof that they are useful except for certain abnormal conditions such as a defective liver, where it is necessary to remove bacteria -- producing toxins." Dr. Milton Brother, husband of Dr. Joyce Brothers, was even more emphatic: "I would never recommended them. It's an archaic practice and could be harmful. Colonics may induce a condition called electrolyte depletion. The bowel needs certain electrolytes -- essential salts, acids and alkalis -- to perform its functions properly, and this sort of intensive irrigation could deplete the colon of these substances."

Not yet entirely deterred, I consulted another physician who believed colonics could improve health. Nobody is really certain, he said, where those all-important electrolytes are conserved, nor can any certain case be made for irrigation affecting their presence in the colon. Admitting that he personally believed in colonics (without including them in his practice), he also told me that these treatments are very popular among the rich and celebrated on the West Coast and Europe.

"Of course it's just not been something people want to talk about much," he explained, and then asked me to keep his name confidential. My anonymous source did, however, refer me to a Manhattan chiropractor and physical therapist who regularly performs this procedure, Dr. H. William Baum.

Dr. Baum, whose spritely step, taut, satin like complexion bely his 85 years, practices naturopathic medicine; that is, he treats sickness primarily through natural means, believing that drugs and surgery should be resorted to only in extreme cases. Taking the holistic approach to health, the naturopathist views disease not as an isolated malfunction, but rather as the indication that the entire body is in the state a "dis-ease."

For over 60 years, Dr. Baum, has been performing colonic irrigations and has never found them less than effective and safe. I mention the negative use of the physicians I'd consulted, but Dr. Baum remained unfazed. "Most doctors don't prescribe vitamins, either," he said, sensibly enough. Reassured by Dr. Baum's manner and remembering the glow colonics had brought to my friend Connie, I swallowed hard and asked to be treated.

At first it was familiar enough; I changed into a pair of paper slippers and one of those thin, hospital green gowns that opened in the back. Then, clutching a pamphlet about colonic, I climbed aboard a long leather table and laid down on my side. The rectal applicator was inserted and the irrigation process began.

Throughout the colonic, I was attached to what resembled an old-fashioned water cooler, about four feet high and place on the end of the examining table. When Dr. Baum pulled a lever in one direction, water burst into the clean, glass tank until at least half way to the top. Then the lever was reversed, and water began to slowly feed into me. The Dr. moderated the pressure so that the water slowly worked its way through the twists and turns, obstructions and gases of the long large intestine.

After a while, I realized with something like amazement that the water slushing up my intestinal tract had risen to just under my rib cage. Even so, I felt relaxed and experienced no pain. Dr. Baum's irrigation was much less unpleasant than either a home

or hospital enema. I was not relaxed enough to drift right off to sleep, but I felt sufficiently comfortable to chat with Dr. Baum and learned a bit more about how and why colonics work.

**Washing Away Wastes**

The indigestible portion of the food you eat, Dr. Baum explained, lodges in the large intestine and stays there until eliminated in a bowel movement. Infrequent movements or periods of constipation can, however, result in a partial decomposition of these waste substances which encrusts the colon and further hinders elimination. These toxins are then reabsorbed into the bloodstream, lowering the body's defenses against bacteria and viruses. The body strains to fight against the poisons, and, if the effort is too great, various organs or even the circulatory system itself can break down. The early indications of this, Dr. Baum continued, includes sallow skin, nervous irritability, coated tongue, bad breath, offensive body odor, headaches, bloating, poor appetite, and a feeling of stomach heaviness -- symptoms which bore a marked resemblance to my own complaints.

Colonics might not been necessary, Dr. Baum went on, if Americans had enough bulk in their diets, exercise regularly, and avoid the chemical toxins contained in alcohol, tobacco, polluted air, and processed foods. Few of us, however, do lead such uncontaminated lives.

Why, I wondered, can some people smoke and drink and eat poorly and still remain in good physical health? Dr. Baum explained that this lucky group has a tremendous natural capacity to eliminate toxins from their systems; but even so, he advised me not to be too jealous: "they're bad habits will catch up with them someday."

Colonic irrigation can be performed with varying frequency. Dr. Baum thinks first-time patients should have three in a row to be sure they're thoroughly cleansed, and after that, the period of treatments "depends on what I see coming out." A few people do emetics once a week for years, others one a month, while most people are satisfied with three or four irrigations a year, often timing their treatments to correspond with the change of seasons. "This shift to warm or cold weather," says Dr. Baum, "can set up the body's rhythms. An irrigation helps you adjust. Actually, these treatments aren't designed to cure any specific ailment; rather, they're designed to tune up the system so it becomes more capable of healing itself."

I asked Dr. Baum if a laxative would be equally effective. His answer was an emphatic no: "colonics involve only the large intestine," he explained, "while laxatives pass through the small intestine as well. That's where digestion and absorption of nutrients occur, vital processes which should not be interfered with. Besides, laxatives are, in a sense, addictive and for them to continue to be effective, you need to take a larger and larger dosage."

So, with irrigation, the small intestine is left to itself (as it should be) and only the toxins contained in the colon are washed away. Dr. Baum's reasoning seemed sound enough to me as my hour long irrigation drew to a close and I prepared to reap the benefits of his ministrations.

**Aftermath**

As I climbed off the treatment table, I felt wonderful -- high, energetic, positive, and

strong. Before I left his office, Dr. Baum told me to take it easy the rest of the day and suggested I change my diet to include a lot of fresh fruits and vegetables, as well as plenty of bulk, and that I stay away from refined or processed foods. These changes would improve bowel functioning, he said, and lead to better overall health as well. I left feeling both peppy and inspired.

A few hours later, however, my high had completely faded, I was nauseous,dizzy and nervously dialing Dr. Baum. He was not just reassuring me, but positively congratulatory as I reeled off my symptoms. "That's the body's continuing where the treatment left off," he told me. "The irrigation obviously stirred up a lot of poisons. Eat something mild at regular intervals, rest, and come back in a few days for another treatment."

I did just that and continued the treatments once a month for nearly a year, sometimes adding an extra one when life was particularly stressful. I also followed Dr. Baums advice about diet and within a few months notice that I no longer had to discipline myself to eat properly. My craving for sugar had disappeared -- I genuinely preferred an apple or helping of low-fat yogurt to a rich sweet. I also found myself developing a queasy aversion to coffee, cigarettes, and to food preservatives -- my body had learned to be naturally repelled by toxic substances.

After a year of colonic, my appearance and energy levels were both radically improved. No more draggy mornings or late afternoon slumps. The bags under my eyes have disappeared entirely, and a sallow, yellowish tone that had spoiled my skin has been replaced by a healthy glow. I seem to think more clearly now, and I need less sleep. In a word, both my body and mind feel marvelously clean.

I couldn't be more enthusiastic about colonics, and, as it happens, I'm in pretty distinguished company. I understand that John Lennon, John Carradine, Mae West, and Dick Gregory are all regulars. Want to join this select company? You should know colonic irrigations cost about thirty dollars, and most M.D.'s don't give these treatments, you are likely to get help from a chiropractor or physical therapists.