

Colon health

By Heidi du Preez

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Our food and lifestyles are slowly doing us in by undermining our health and vitality. Sickness and disease are claiming a greater and greater portion of our energy, time, money and emotions. We are becoming health poor and vitality bereft. In order for our health and vitality to improve, our bodies must be well-nourished and kept clean, inside and out.

Our colon (or bowel) is the most neglected and ignored part of our body. Bowel management is virtually an undiscussed topic in our culture and Western society. It's not nice to talk about. Somehow the unspoken idea has crept upon us, that the bowel will take care of itself.

Colon health is paramount in any health regimen. Every patient will respond to treatment quicker and more effectively if the colon is sorted out first. The colon is intimately related to every cell in the body. Well over 90% of all chronic and degenerative diseases come from an unclean body whose sewer is backed up. If we make the analogy of the colon being the body's waste disposal or sewer system, we can begin to understand its function more clearly.

The toxic bowel

Within 8 to 10 hours of eating, the food has passed through the small intestines and is mostly digested. It then enters the large intestines or colon for the final digestive processes and elimination. In order to live, the human body must be nourished. However, the elimination of undigested food and other waste products is as important as the proper digestion and assimilation of food in the intestines.

Your colon cannot work efficiently if you eat processed, fried and over-cooked foods, refined sugar and excessive amounts of salt. Instead of furnishing nourishment to the nerves, muscles, cells and tissues of the walls of the colon, such foods can actually cause starvation of the colon. A starved colon may let a lot of faecal matter pass through it, but is unable to complete the digestive and nourishing processes and functions intended for it. Additionally, processed and devitalised foods are notoriously lacking in fibre and bulk. They tend to be dry, sticky and pasty.

When we eat these refined and processed foods, they leave a coating of mucus on the inner walls of the colon like plaster on a wall. In the course of time this coating may gradually increase its thickness until there is only a small hole through the centre. The faecal matter still passes through this small hole. Several bowel movements a day are therefore not sufficient indication that all is well, especially if a diet of only cooked or processed food is eaten.

A clogged-up colon prevents the absorption and use of the additional nutritional elements present in the waste residue of the colon. Instead of assimilating the nutrition from undigested food, we utilise only 10% of its real value – the rest is wasted down the eliminative drain. We can't put good food in a dirty body and expect good results. Impacted faeces on the side of the colon also cause imbalances in the intestinal flora and interfere with the formation of peristaltic waves necessary for evacuation purposes.

Bacterial action in the large intestines plays a major role in nutrition, digestion and elimination. The friendly bacteria synthesise valuable nutrients by digesting portions of the faecal mass. Among others, vitamin K and portions of the B complex vitamins are produced. They also play a role in the lubrication of the colon, aiding elimination.

In a proper, clean, healthy environment the healthy scavenging bacteria will control the pathogenic kind. However, the colon usually contains the waste and residues of many meals, anywhere from five to twenty or even more. The accumulations on the bowel wall become a breeding ground for pathogenic or putrefactive bacteria. This provides ample opportunity for putrefaction and fermentation to take place.

Putrefaction is the source of the foul odour and gasses, which originate in the colon. These gasses are highly poisonous. The blood capillaries to the colon begin to pick up the toxins, poisons and noxious debris as it seeps through the bowel wall. All the tissues and organs of the body are now taking on toxic substances. This is the beginning of true auto-intoxication on a physiological level. Some doctors believe that you can't reabsorb toxic material from the bowel. The Indican test uses a urine sample to test for the presence of indol, a metabolic byproduct of the action of intestinal bacteria on the amino acid tryptophan. The level of indican is an index of the efficiency of protein digestion. During urinalyses the presence of indican will therefore reveal whether toxic material was absorbed from the bowel.

As the body becomes increasingly toxic, proper oxidation cannot take place in the tissues. Without oxygenation, we lack energy and a tired body continues the downward spiral. Symptoms of a toxic bowel include bad breath and/or body odour, coated tongue, headaches or migraines, constipation and/or diarrhoea, bloatedness, flatulence and heartburn.

Constipation

Constipation is the number one affliction underlying nearly every ailment. It is the root of all *dis-ease*. Constipation is often referred to as the 'modern plague' – the greatest present-day danger to health. It affects the health of the colon, upon which

the health of the body in its entirety depends. Constipation is the clogging up of the colon. Some people carry up to 7 kg of impacted waste material in their colon around with them.

One bowel movement a day is a positive indication of constipation. X-ray examinations of the colon after a test meal show that in persons whose bowels move once a day, the body wastes are usually retained for 50 hours or more. The bowels should move at least 3 times a day or after each meal. Some health professionals claim that one bowel movement every 3 to 5 days may be considered normal. However, normal in today's world does not necessarily mean healthy. Diarrhoea can also be a symptom of a badly clogged colon, in which all the faecal solids are being held back and only eliminative liquids are getting through. Diarrhoea can therefore be a sign of constipation!

Apart from leading to auto-intoxication, constipation can also result in a prolapsed transverse colon or crowding of the colon against other organs. It can affect the bladder or reproductive organs, for example, the ovaries and fallopian tubes or the prostate. This can cause problems with urination or even infertility.

What are the two main causes of constipation? The first is the consumption of processed, devitalised and refined foods. The second is neglecting to stop everything we are doing when the urge to evacuate the bowels should drive us headlong into the bathroom!

Measures you should take to prevent constipation

- **Diet:** It is important to consume a wholefood diet consisting mainly of fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains. At least 50% of the diet should consist of raw food. The major contributor of constipation is refined carbohydrates, bread being the main culprit. Our mass-produced bread is soft, gooeey, devitalised, nutritionally deficient and laced with chemical additives. South Africans eat 2.9 billion loaves of bread per annum, equating to three slices/person/day.¹ No wonder we've become a constipated nation! All baked products made with refined flours should be limited, ideally avoided, that means bread, cakes, pies, pasta and pastry products. Rather include whole grain millet, rye, yellow maize and brown rice in your diet. Wheat bran is not an ideal form of fibre, being very abrasive to the inside of the colon, thus acting as an irritant.

Animal protein, meat and dairy, are mucus-forming and therefore contribute to constipation. Meat also introduces putrefactive bacteria and serves as a wonderful growth medium for these bacteria. As a result of this putrefaction, ammonia and other alkaline substances are formed, which paralyse the bowel and therefore further contribute to constipation. Limit meat protein to once a day in your diet.

- **Water:** Most people who suffer from constipation habitually drink too little water. On a daily basis, you should consume at least 300 ml of good quality, filtered water per 10 kg of body weight.

- **Responding to the 'call':** Make time to respond to the call of nature! If the nerve impulse to evacuate is ignored too often, its function will diminish. Don't hold back.

- **Exercise:** Daily bodily activity is necessary, being a way of mechanically stimulating the intestines.

- **Stress:** Emotional and spiritual development is very important, since stress is one of the major contributors of constipation and ill health. Our modern lifestyles pose many stresses on us, which we need to address effectively in order to enjoy health and vitality.

- **Posture:** A stooped or relaxed posture when sitting or standing tends to induce constipation by weakening of the abdominal muscles and causing congestion of the liver and all other abdominal organs.

- **Stop smoking:** Numerous laboratory experiments have shown that the use of tobacco in any form has a paralysing effect upon the splanchnic nerves – without the aid of these sympathetic nerves normal, rhythmical bowel movements are impossible.

- **Avoid alcohol, caffeine, chocolate and other narcotic drugs:** These tend to produce constipation by causing chronic intestinal mucus, ulcers of the stomach and paralysis of the sympathetic nerves. Alcohol and caffeine also dehydrate the system, further contributing to constipation. Supplemental iron can also cause constipation.

Laxatives

Laxatives are 'big business'. This is evident in the prevalence of constipation. Laxatives usually result in the ejection of debris from the bowel, but to the detriment of your colon. The use of laxatives is not only habit-forming, but also destructive to the membrane of the colon. The laxative acts as an irritant to the colon, without stimulating normal peristaltic movements. Persistent laxative use can result in a spastic colon, further aggravating constipation! Chronic constipation may be a precursor for a more serious condition of the colon, for example colon cancer. It can eventually lead to surgery and a colostomy. Health practitioners are not teaching people how to manage their lifestyles. They must begin to educate, rather than medicate! Drugs are given to alleviate symptoms, but they mask a deeper and often a chronic condition that goes undetected and uncared for until it is too late to correct.

Detoxification

Detoxification is often neglected, overlooked or underestimated in the healing arts, despite the fact that all health professionals realise that a sick body is a toxic body. When anyone has reached the degenerative disease stage, it is a sign that toxic settlements have overtaken the body. The first step in achieving a smooth-running, happy and efficient body is by cleaning out the colon. We need to cleanse out the toxins and old faecal matter that has been accumulating and gluing itself to the inside of the colon and overall system of the body.

The impacted waste on the inside of the colon can only be effectively removed through colon hydrotherapy. Like the removal of plaster, the faecal coating in the colon must be thoroughly soaked and saturated with just plain water in order that its removal may take place gradually and comfortably. I would only recommend colonics administered with the gravitation

method, not with a machine that uses pressure. The most important and vital adjunct to good colonic procedures is a knowledgeable, professional and trained therapist.

The greatest criticism against colon hydrotherapy is that it washes out the beneficial intestinal flora and thus deprives the colon of a valuable means of lubrication. This school of thought is wrong. Obviously, when the packed accumulation of faeces in the bowel leads to faecal incrustation, it is not possible for the lining of the colon to function normally, and the glands in this lining cannot produce the necessary intestinal flora or lubrication. Such lack of lubrication only serves to intensify a state of constipation and to generate toxæmia. Further, the pathogenic putrefactive bacteria far outnumber the beneficial flora in an impacted colon. Rather eliminate them all and replace only the beneficial bacteria with an effective probiotic.

Colon hydrotherapy in combination with a deep tissue-cleansing programme is the most effective way of ridding the body of toxins and therefore restoring health and vitality. Eliminating parasites, as well as a liver and gallbladder flush should also form part of an effective detoxification programme.

Please note that the dividends of effective bowel management are not always evident right away. It can take months or even years to correct problems that have taken many years to come about. Developing proper elimination is half the job. The other half is rebuilding damaged tissue with a balanced wholefood diet.

Your health is your own responsibility. You can't pay for health – you earn it! If the colon is neglected, each passing year has its ravaging effect on the sewage system of the body. Prevention is better than cure. Look after your colon's health!

References:

1. Cover story. *South African Food Review* 2006; Volume 33, Number 1: 3.

Further reading:

1. Jensen B. *Tissue Cleansing through Bowel Management*. 10th ed. California: Bernard Jensen Enterprises, 1981.
2. Walker NW. *Colon Health: the Key to a Vibrant Life*. Arizona: Norwalk Press, 1979.
3. www.naturalnutrition.co.za/detoxification.asp