Evidence for the Benefits of Regular Colon Cleansing

Compiled by H. Hamilton

Would most people benefit by cleansing the colon?

Medical writers have, time and time again, expressed surprise at the amazing capacity of the colon for holding excrement. There have been cases known in which enough matter was stored away to fill several colons of normal proportions. The walls of the tube were greatly extended and swollen out, and packed almost tight with hardened faeces. Cases are on record in which people have gone for several weeks without movements. A case is related in which the treatment of flushing the colon brought to light cherry stones swallowed 4 months before.

Even among persons who claim to have a natural movement every day, there is often a condition of impacted colon manifest. As Dr. Forrest an American authority has written: “There may be a discharge everyday, even more than one, and yet the person may be badly constipated. Bear in mind that, accurately speaking, constipation means a loaded colon. Now, if from one end of this packed organ a small quantity is discharged daily, the colon still remains full by the addition at the other end and thus constipation is present and continues even though there is a daily discharge from the lower end only.”

Dr. Turner afterwards conducted an extended series of investigations with the startling result that he felt justified in claiming that fully 70% of all adults are afflicted in a similar way, in varying degrees. A Chicago physician in the “Medical Examiner” says “The formation of cells or cavities in the colon become the seat of faecal accumulations only too often unnoticed by the physician. Accumulations can occur in any part of the colon. These cavities in the colon contain small faecal accumulations extending over weeks, months or even years. Reports from hospitals where autopsies are conducted show that in about 500 cases in which examinations of the colon have been made, about 50 were found to have colons in a natural condition. The majority were found to be greatly clogged with hardened excrement.

It has been estimated that with the majority of people living in our so called “civilised life” nearly 70% suffer from constipation to a greater or lesser degree. Even among persons who claim to have a natural movement every day, there is often a condition of impacted colon manifest. A well-known authority has said “Daily movements of the bowel are no sign that the colon is not impacted; in fact the worst cases of impaction that we ever saw were those in which daily movements of the bowels occurred.”

As the reader will have seen by this time, the conditions that make the application of the internal bath [or large volume enema] a necessity, arise from a violation of natures fundamental laws regarding normal evacuations, brought on by the unnatural habits of life that have followed in the train of civilisation. From The Practical Water Cure - Yogi Ramacharaka.

In my search for the right expert in the field of colon therapy the name Dr. Vanita Forsyth came up again and again. During her life she had always suffered from bowel problems, which resulted in the loss of her colon, the rectum and part of the small intestine, surgically. When it was too late for her, she found the importance of a clean colon and regular bowel movements, and so has devoted her whole life to helping others avoid the tragedy that she endured.
She is now an expert in her field, and where others would have given up on life completely after such an operation, Dr. Forsyth has just started to live and fight. Thousands of people have benefitted from her knowledge, and people can only suspect what terrible illness and operations they would have had to endure had they not changed their way of life, after talking to this lady.

Winters: Do many people suffer from a poor colon?

Forsyth: About 95% of the population. The other 5% has either been on a perfect diet since birth or live in the Himalayas. It is estimated that over 75 million Americans suffer from bowel problems. The second leading cause of death in the cancer field is cancer of the bowel, more than 100 000 people a year die from colon cancer. Even the American Cancer Society states, “Evidence in recent years suggests that most bowel cancer is caused by environmental agents. Some scientists believe that a diet high in beef and/or low in fiber is the cause.” Colitis and diverticulitis affect probably over two and a half million people. There are approximately 120 000 people who undergo a radical colostomy or ileostomy per year. I was one of them.

Winters: Doctors tell many people that one bowel movement every two days is fine. What do you think?

Forsyth: I think it is absolutely ridiculous. I’ve even known some doctors to say that even once a week may be normal for you. Do they also think it is ‘normal’ to have a bowel lined with black hardened mucous. Years ago, the famous Dr. Harvey Kellogg of Battle Creek, Michigan said: “Of the 22 000 operations I have personally performed, I have never found a single normal colon.” If Dr. Kellogg made this comment around 1900 just imagine how much worse the situation is today.

From Dr. Vanita Forsyth interviewed by Jason Winters-1984.

I don’t know why, but people of our culture have a deep-seated reluctance to relate to the colon or it’s functions. People don’t want to personally get involved with it by giving themselves enemas or colonics. They become deeply embarrassed at having someone else do it for them.

When I first mention to clients that they need a minimum of 12 colonics or many more enemas than 12 during a fasting or cleansing program they are inevitably shocked. To most it seems that no one in their right mind would recommend such a treatment, and that I must certainly be motivated by greed or some kind of a psychological quirk. Then I routinely show them reproductions of X-rays of the large intestine showing obvious loss of normal structure and function resulting from a combination of constipation, the effects of gravity, poor abdominal muscle tone, emotional stress, and poor diet. In the average colon more than 50% of the hastrum (muscles that impel fecal matter through the organ) are dysfunctional due to loss of tone caused by impaction of fecal matter and/or constriction of the large intestine secondary to stress (holding muscular tension in the abdominal area) and straining during bowel movement. The average person also has a prolapsed (sagging) transverse colon, and a distorted ascending and descending colon.

I took a course in colon therapy before purchasing my first colonic machine. The chiropractor teaching the class required all of his patients scheduled for colonics to take a barium enema followed by an X-ray of their large intestine prior to having colonics and then make subsequent X-rays after each series of 12 colonics. The X-rays showed that it took a minimum of 12 colon treatments to bring about a minimal but observable change in the structure of the colon in the
desired direction, and for the patient to begin to notice that bowel function was improving, plus the fact that they started to feel better.

Most of his patients experienced so much immediate relief they voluntarily took at least four complete series, or 48 colonics, for the patients to notice a significant improvement in the function of the colon, and their X-rays began to look normal in terms of structure.

In reviewing over 10,000 X-rays taken at his clinic prior to starting colonics, the chiropractor had seen only two normal colon X-rays and these were from farm boys who grew up eating foods from the garden and doing lots of hard work. I still think colonics are far more effective if people are on a cleansing diet too. However, I was delighted to see the potential for helping people through colonics.

For me, the most interesting part of this colonic school was that I personally was required to have my own barium enema and X-ray. I was privately certain that mine would look normal, because after all, I had been on a raw food diet for six years, and done a considerable amount of fasting, all of which was reputed to repair a civilized colon. Much to my surprise my colon looked just as mangled and dysfunctional as everyone else’s, only somewhat worse because it had a loop in the descending colon similar to a cursive letter “e” which doctors call a volvulus.

I ended up giving myself over a hundred colonics at the rate of three a week over many months. I then out of curiosity had another barium enema and X-ray to validate my results. Sure enough the picture showed a colon that looked far more ‘normal’ with no volvulus. That little “e” had disappeared. From How and When to Be Your Own Doctor - Dr. Isabelle A. Moser with Steve Solomon June, 1997.

Are the objections to regular colon cleansing justified?
Those of us who believe a bowel movement a day keeps the doctor away can think again. To keep our bodies working at optimum level, we should completely empty our systems after every large meal. If this doesn’t happen, we start to suffer problems including poor lymph drainage and circulation, cellulite, dull problem skin and stomach disorders. Regular colonic hydrotherapy or enemas thoroughly cleanse the entire system and encourages it to work more efficiently. Surprisingly, this treatment has recently become increasingly popular. From Top Sante Health - December 1994.

Out of thousands of X-ray pictures of the colons of different people, men, women AND children, the only ones I have ever seen that approach the lines of a normal colon have been those of children born of women who practiced our program of diet and high enemas with the children while they were growing up. From Become Younger - Dr. N. W. Walker BSc - 1971.

Twenty years as a specialist in diseases of the lower bowel have demonstrated to the writer that chronic inflammation and often ulceration of the rectum and sigmoid flexure, in 99% of cases is the cause of chronic constipation. For those suffering from chronic constipation, an occasional intestinal washout, or bath, is thought to be satisfactory. Away with the occasional habit for intestinal bodily cleanliness. If there is a necessity for cleansing and purifying the bowels at all, why not do it properly and systematically. There are persistent causes for internal uncleanness, which require regular periods of cleansing until a cure is effected.
There are some hygienic students who have adopted the idea of cleansing the bowels with warm water once or twice a week, and yet they find that they are not properly cleansed. They still have periods of biliousness and misery. They wonder at themselves for being so rash and bold as to take an enema twice a week, and begin to feel that they have reached a point of positive danger.

One objection is that the use of the enema will weaken the bowels, which are already too ‘weak’ to expel their contents. “Atony, paralysis, fatty degeneration of the gut, are bad enough,” say these objectors, “without having an enema increase their uselessness.” This diagnosis is wrong and the objection groundless. Distend and contract an organ for a short time two or three times a day, and it will gain in strength from the exercise. What more gentle means of exercising the large intestine than by the enema?

**Enemas do not have the power to weaken that part of the bowel involved in disease. For 20 years I have found that almost every case of intestinal foulness, diarrhoea, indigestion and self-poisoning was due to too much activity and vigour of the bowels, as a result of proctitis, colitis etc.**

The enema does no more than kindly to dilate the constricted region, which when dilated, evokes a harmonious concerted action of all the nerves and muscles to pass along and down the burden of feces, which, without the aid of the flood of water, they had been incapable of moving, and would have had to leave to poison the system. What an erroneous and absurd idea that the enema should weaken the bowels. Exercise ought to strengthen muscular tissue and what could give the bowels more gentle exercise than the proper use of them?

Another objection is that the enema is unnatural. Admitting this charge, I would say that inasmuch as proctitis, colitis and constipation are unnatural, the use of a rational means to overcome the consequences of these diseases is imperative. The enema is such a means. Surely it is unhygienic and irrational to ignore the valuable service of the enema in cases in which the bowels are in an unnatural condition.

A further objection is that if you begin the use of the enema you will have to continue with its use; you cannot stop, and, lo and behold!, the enema habit is formed. Usually the first symptom of proctitis is constipation, and for relief the enema habit should be formed and continued while the constipation remains. When you have removed the intestinal inflammation, then the constipation will disappear and the enema habit can be discontinued. A clean habit ought not to be objectionable, especially in cases in which it is needed to prevent toxic substances from entering the system. Enemas can in no way be harmful; therefore the fear of habit is absurd and should not receive a moments consideration.

Many doctors, I am sorry to say, encourage with a chuckle this foolish attitude - “Any time to stool you can manage to get, so that you stool at least once a day, or once every two or three days; stool when its normal for you to do so.” By the use of the enema you can secure two or three stools a day, as desired, and while you are preventing self-poisoning, you are regaining a normal habit, which for so many years may have been denied you. The enema regularly and properly used, is the remedy par excellence.

The length of time during which enemas are to be used, whether months or years, will depend on the character of the disease that made its use necessary. Free evacuation of the contents of the bowels can be accomplished twice a day by the injection at first, of three to four quarts of water - to obtain a good flushing of one’s sewer. Before taking the large injection, relieve the bowels of any
gas and faeces if possible. Then take a small injection, using just enough to bring relief of as much faeces and gas as possible. Repeat the small injection once more before taking the large injection. If advisable, gradually lessen the quantity injected to one quart at a time. **Do not give up treatment under which you have improved if it requires one, two or three years to accomplish what you have so well started out to do.** Do not longer perpetuate the dire results of a foul alimentary canal and consequently a diseased body. From Intestinal Ills - Jamison MD - 1920.

For over twenty years Dr. Stevens has practiced flushing upon himself as a precaution, and, although now between seventy and eighty years old, since beginning its use he has never known a day of sickness. He recommends flushing [using 4 quart enemas] every two or three days as a preventive of disease. He says that it in no way interferes with the normal movements of the bowels. To test it he has frequently discontinued its use for a week, with the result of a regular movement, as soon as enough faecal matter had accumulated to demand it.

Dr. A. Wilford Hall, Ph. D., LL. D. and W.E. Forest, B.A., M.D., two world-famous authorities on internal bathing, are among the thousands of physicians who have given their hearty and active endorsement and support to colon flushing [using enemas of 3 to 4 quarts.] Experience has proved, and will continue to prove that scientific colonic cleansing, as already described can only be healthful. We have made this subject our constant study for the past 35 years. Over one million grateful patients have testified to the value of the internal bath and diet. For the simple purpose of preserving health, once or twice a week will be found amply sufficient for colon flushing. From The Royal Road - C.A. Tyrrell, M.D. - 395th Ed 1947.

Some years ago we saw a lady from Indianapolis who had used an enema every morning for 22 years. She had been a poor invalid suffering almost continuously from sick headaches and bilious attacks. When cathartics no longer worked she began using the enema for the relief it gave her. She was warned by her physician, that this would paralyse her colon. She kept on with its use. She never had any more sick headaches or bilious attacks. At 70 as young as ever she said that the enema had saved her life and continued to keep her in good health. From Health via Food - W.H. Hay MD. - 1934.

An American doctor of osteopathic repute, who in early life was subjected to a most crude form of intestinal ‘short-circuiting’, has been obliged to use the enema daily over a period of twenty-five years and maintains that she is in very much better health today, with no signs of sagging or prolapsed colon. From The Fast Way to Health and Vigour - H.R.Brown - 1960

Some physicians threaten their patients with disaster if they take enemas, but I can’t see the sense of this because in 37 year’s experience I have never seen anyone whose colon appeared to have been damaged by repeated washings. **Recently I saw a woman who had taken enemas every day for 17 years, but X-rays of her colon showed nothing unusual. Furthermore the mucosa was perfectly normal.** In another case in which the woman had taken enemas everyday for 10 years, I was able to study a pile of films which she had had made of her colon at yearly intervals. These showed no change in the size or shape of the bowel, and in this case also the mucosa was normal.

I have asked hundreds of physicians, if they had ever seen enemas do harm, but all that an occasional one could tell me about was a scratch on the rectal wall produced by the tip on the end of the tube. I have therefore no fear of enemas, and I cannot see why so many physicians now object to them as they do. From Nervous Indigestion and Pain - Dr. Alvarez. 1950.
If I were to write the story of all the cases in which enemas or colonic irrigations seemed to lift the patient from the very jaws of death it would fill volumes. Mrs Lumbar Pain once told me that she had suffered from pains in her back every day for years. After close questioning I advised daily enemas for a month. At the end of the month she told me that she did not believe it possible for anyone her age (50) to be so free from pains in the back. In my experience about 85% of back pains can be relieved by treating the bowels.

An eminent heart specialist came to see me one morning and asked me to listen to his heart. It was skipping badly and had upset his nerves. I suggested colonic irrigations, and he protested vociferously, but he finally agreed to take daily enemas. Two days later he came in smiling like the famous chesire cat. He told me that when he was having his enema that morning he felt “as if a pocket was emptying itself”. Immediately his heart seemed to steady down. My past experience had been that I could stop skipping heart and extra systole more frequently and more rapidly by treating the bowels, especially by colonic irrigation or enemas, than by any heart medicines. From Man Alive You’re Half Dead - Dr. D.C. Munro 1953

We were taught before coming to you that colonics and enemas were dangerous. Now I can definitely say that they have saved our lives and brought abundant health to both of us. One important fact is that my wife had normal natural movements after 11 months of daily enemas and colonic irrigations. From Are You Slipping - Norwalk Press, Publishers, Denver, Colo - 1961.

I take between 2 and 3 enemas everyday, and have done so for the past 15 years. I do this early in the morning and I feel very relaxed for the rest of the day. Healthwise I haven’t had a cold or flu during this period of time. Anonymous - 2002.

The sexual stimulation of an enema has been known for many years - male patients frequently have a spontaneous erection when being given an enema, usually much to their embarrassment. The recognition of the sexual factor may have contributed to the enema’s demise - a medical treatment [say these objectors] must certainly not be enjoyable!. From Forum Vol 26 No 3 1993

An amazing number of people scorn what they suspect to be the ‘pain or pleasure’ aspect of having colon therapy. One leading London colon surgeon said, disapprovingly, he ‘was sure people got pleasure out of it’, as if pleasure was an unacceptable facet of healing. Case history memoirs of therapists who have been giving the treatment for years have suggested that when it does occur it is harmless. From Principles of Colonic Irrigation - Jillie Collings - 1996.

Should enemas be given to infants and children?
COLIC IN INFANTS - If warmth or rubbing do not cause the passage of wind, about a cupful of warm salt water should be gently passed into the bowels with an ordinary rubber bulb enema. The promptness with which this procedure usually gives relief, seems quite wonderful to those unaccustomed to its use. From Ladies Handbook of Home Treatment.

A few months ago a friend telephoned around midnight to tell me that their week-old baby seemed to be having cramps, was yelling his head off and they did not know what to do - What could I suggest? I asked him if he had given the baby an enema - he said: “An enema to a baby a week old?” I told him if it were my baby I would certainly not waste a minute in giving it one. He called me back 30 minutes later and said they had given the baby an enema and the baby was already sleeping peacefully and soundly. From Are You Slipping and Become Younger - Dr. N.W. Walker
When a child is attacked by an ailment of any kind, you should first cleanse the lower bowel with an enema. **In order to be effective sufficient water should be given in this treatment to very thoroughly flush the lower bowel so that the colon will be cleansed throughout its entire length.** From Encyclopaedia of Health - B. McFadden - 1940.

The colon of an infant of six months will hold about 1 pint [500ml] **without distention**, and at the age of two years from 2 to 3 pints [1 to 1.5 liters]. Children [5 years and older] can take 2 quarts (liters) without harm. From Diseases of Infancy and Childhood - L.E. Holt. 1922.

.**The fact that many children don’t take easily to enemas should not deter you from giving them if they are necessary. They can be invaluable for the treatment of certain illnesses like fevers, when the colon needs to be cleared of faeces as quickly as possible to accelerate the healing process. It helps to explain to the child that an enema is necessary to clean out all waste from the colon so that they can get better much more quickly. Don’t ask the child to try to retain the enema. Just sit her on a potty or the toilet and let it go.** From Handbook of Herbal Health - Kitty Campion’s - 1985.

When the child needs an enema the mother should be gentle but firm. Any tentativeness or shame makes it difficult for the child to behave normally. The enema should never become a habit. It can be given as soon as the mother realises that her child is ill and again the same evening and each evening thereafter while the child is fasting. It can be given if the child has worms and it may be given to relieve a headache if constipation is thought to be present. From Children’s Health and Happiness - Margaret Brady.

My wife always says she dreads giving large enemas to our children because there is always a lot of whining and because she doesn’t like to cause them discomfort. I consider that the positive results of the procedure are what are important. I feel that a large volume enema is the most effective treatment. It may be uncomfortable but it works. From David - 2002

From the age of 5 or 6 years, whenever I got a cold or flu or fever or other childhood ailment, mom’s remedy was to give me a full enema. She had me lie on my back on the bathroom floor and she lubricated and inserted a children’s nozzle. The nozzle was connected to her 2 quart enema bag that was full of soapsuds. I usually couldn’t take the full bag with the first enema. With the second enema, she lowered the bag so the water would run in slower, rubbed my tummy continuously and told me to breathe deeply. Mom said that I needed to take the whole bag for it to do any good, and had to hold it as long as I could, because the cramps meant that the enema was working. She helped me by squeezing and holding my buttocks together so firmly I couldn’t let go if I wanted to. She praised me for being so good and taking the full enema and holding it so long, and said how proud she was of me. **What amazed me was, after mom’s full enemas, I always felt so clean and peaceful, slept like a baby, and the next morning I always felt so good.** Years later I told my mother how grateful I was to her for my early enema experiences, and that I give them to myself regularly to stay clean and healthy. From Ray – 2003.

One day, when I was 12 years old in high school I became ill and came home. Mother took my temperature, which was slightly above 101 degrees. She said that I needed a ‘full’ enema and asked if I wanted her help. Since I was taking it for a fever and the flu rather than just constipation, I knew I needed to take the fullest enema possible. If mother gave it to me she would push my limits with as much as I could hold. I told her that it would be nice if she would. Mother coaxed 2 ½ quarts of soapy water into me, my usual limit for a full soapsuds enema at that age. An hour later she gave me a 2 ½ quart baking soda rinse. Today my maximum adult capacity is 3 quarts. From Marlene
Are Large Three to Four Quart Enemas Safe to Use?

“Beware of using tap water or a soap solution, especially when large quantities of water are used. Soap solutions result in unnecessary irritations of the colon and plain water risks upsetting the sugar and salt balance in the blood, which can result in great tiredness and even total collapse. Solutions used for enemas should contain a teaspoonful of salt to each liter of water used.” From Clair Boewer, who runs the leading German colonic clinic in Munich.

Has the reader any idea of the amount of water required for the distention of an elastic muscular tube, 5 feet (1,5m) in length and 2,5 inches (6,25cm) in the widest part? The large intestine is capable of great distention. [The quantity in serious cases of faecal impaction can be as much as 2 gallons or more.] The amount of water usually injected at one time - from 1 pint to two quarts of water, can hardly be said to distend the bowels at all. Free evacuation of the contents of the bowels can be accomplished twice a day by the injection at first of three to four quarts of water - to obtain a good flushing of one’s sewer. From Intestinal Ills - Jamison MD - 1920.

The purpose of any internal bath (or full enema) is to clear the entire bowels of fecal residue. The capacity of the colon in the average well-grown adult is about 4 quarts, but even in the case of a person below the average size, it may safely be assumed that 3 quarts are really necessary for a successful treatment. Holding 3 to 4 quarts will naturally distend the abdomen and produce some discomfort, but do not be concerned about causing any harm. The colon is a wonderfully elastic organ, which has been found to hold 8 quarts or more, in serious cases of impaction, but it would be utterly impossible to inject that quantity by means of an enema [because of the more rapid filling of the colon], and intense pain would occur before the point of rupture could be reached.

The internal bath should not be used within three hours of eating a full meal; because if both the stomach and the transverse colon are distended at the same time they press against each other; and since the stomach is the more sensitive of the two, nausea is probable. Just before retiring at night is by far the most convenient time to take it. The best plan, in commencing treatment, is to use a quart or three pints for the first night, for the next night two or three quarts, and by the third or fourth night the full quantity [three to four quarts] should be taken. From The Royal Road - C.A. Tyrrell, M.D. – 1907 & 395th Ed 1947.

One case to which I was called was a woman who had a doctor and a trained nurse. I asked the nurse to give her a high enema. She did not succeed very well, so I got a four quart enema can and then we succeeded in giving her the enema, which brought forth lots of corruption, hard balls etc., showing that she had pockets in her colon. This treatment greatly relieved her. From Back to Eden - Jethro Kloss. - 1939 - Revised and expanded 1988.

Question: I have an boyfriend who insists on me using four quarts every time that I give him an enema. I am concerned about the danger of this. He is able to hold four quarts for about 30 minutes even with a deep tissue massage, so that is not a concern for him. Should I be concerned for his health ? From Cherise on 6/13/2002.

Reply: No Cherise. I think 4 quart enemas are great. I use them all the time and think its important to "inflate or stretch" the colon thoroughly for best cleansing, but do it slowly and gently for safety. For your own enemas, cleanse first with smaller enemas and gradually take more solution. Always go slow with this and you will reach a point where you will feel you cannot hold any more water, and its time to stop, even if the entire 4 quarts are not used. From Bill - Enema Health.
Do some adults use high enemas of 4 quarts on a regular basis?

A large saline enema can be used as a bowel cleanser in cases where it is important to avoid irritating the bowels. **Four quarts (liters) or more would be a large enema.** Few patients can hold a large enema at a single injection [at the first attempt]. Instruct the patient to take in and hold as much water as possible. If possible the patient should retain the water a few minutes before discharging. Repeat until a thorough bowel movement is secured. ....... From Modern Medical Counselor - 1951.

I bought a 4 quart enema bag from Klystra and never thought that I could ever come close to taking it all into my 115lb body. Boy was I wrong! Even when I have been constipated for 3 to 4 days, I can take most of that bag as long as I relax and distract myself. I hang the bag only 2 feet above my bottom, assume the position on my back and release the clamp. From Jess 20/03/2002

I was taught to take enemas for the first time by a school friend of mine at her house when I was 15. With the approval of her mother, I watched my friend on two or three visits, take enemas until her stomach was visibly bulging with 3 quarts each time. She told me that her mother took adult enemas of 4 quarts. She persuaded me to let her start me on 2 quart enemas. Well I didn’t like it at all at first, but once I got used to these enemas, my friend pushed me to take more water each time, until I was able to hold 3 quarts for ten minutes. After about three months, by which time I had let her give me about a dozen 3 quart enemas, I began to enjoy the experience and I haven’t looked back since then. I am 36 now, fairly slim, 124 pound but 5’-10” tall. Thanks to the coaching of my friend, I can now manage 3 quarts without any discomfort for the first fill, and for the next fill I take the full 4 quarts. I don’t hang the bag too high, and just let the water trickle into me over about a 20 minute period. Sometimes I hold the last enema for 20 to 30 minutes for the best results. I believe that we are all different,. Try to take as much as you can without feeling too uncomfortable, and if it gets painful you have gone too far. I average a series of 2 or 3 enemas three times a week and have done so for the past 15 years. I also have a professional colonic every two weeks. I feel just great after. From Sally Sullivan a flight attendant – 2002.

I am a 24 year old French girl and I receive a four liter enema twice a week with a colon tube from my mother. She says this is the right quantity for enema for girls and women. I retain the enema for 5 minutes. My mother believes in giving me regular enemas even if I am only mildly constipated. From Francine – 2003.

I am a 62 year old male who takes enemas daily. I enjoy them and have since my mother started giving them to me when I was a little boy. If you want to stay in good shape take at least a three or four quart hot soapy enema daily like I do. I now have prostate cancer and still take my enemas. From Art Cohen - January 24, 1998.

I am pushing 70 and have over 60 years of taking enemas. I soon graduated to the bag. I use two 4 quart bags, which I bought many years ago. Most of the time I can take a whole bag. Bob – 1997.

I am from the former Yugoslavia, married to an American and for the past 18 years have been living in Germany. I’m a mother of 2 teenagers Susanna age 15 and Benedict age 17. They always get high volume enemas once a week, and also when needed for constipation. Before the high enema I give a small 2 quart soapsud enema and then a 3 quart enema of clear water. Then I slowly give them a good high enema. I make sure that they take at least 4 quarts and that they hold it for a full 25 minutes. Only high volume enemas are effective. From A Mom – 2003
Do some people use up to 5 quarts for regular high enemas?

I earnestly advise the “internal bath” - what is usually called “flushing the colon” - but definitely not what is known as taking an injection. Mere injections of one to two quarts as usually practiced, are insufficient and ineffective. The colon is five feet in length and fully three inches in diameter when distended. **To properly wash the colon, at least four or five quarts of water are necessary.** The proper appliance for cleansing the colon has a capacity of five quarts to which the tube is attached. It is an important factor in my system of physical rejuvenation. I strongly urge its practice, at least once a week, though twice a week is better. From Old Age It’s Cause and Prevention - Sanford Bennett - 1912. Revised 1963.

I’m from France, living in Italy. My parents were strict believers in high, large volume enemas. It started when I was 14. I got enemas during my periods, when constipated, when I got a headache, and so on. So I always got a normal 3 liter enema, followed by a full 4 liter enema. Sometimes I also got a very high 5 liter enema. At first I did not like the 4 to 5 liter enemas, but later I learned to enjoy them. From Michelle – 2004.

My mother was a Doctor in Germany who believed in weekly large volume high enemas to flush the diverticulae in the colon. When I was 14 I was given two smaller enemas and then introduced to very large enemas of up to 5 liters. She was always gentle and massaged my tummy and encouraged me in a kind way. I have two daughters (18 and 16) and a son (14). They all get large enemas when constipated. Our doctor prescribed regular large enemas for my eldest daughter for her acne. She is not shy and often asks me to help her, so I do. She can hold her 4 to 5 liter enemas of herbal tea without difficulty. From Helga - Germany - 2003.

When I was sick or constipated, I got an enema of 1 or 2 quarts. When I was 12 these enemas were given regularly. Once a month I got a 'real good cleansing' with smaller enemas first, followed by a large enema of 4 quarts of baking soda. By the time I was 16 the last enema was 5 liters.

If you are a mother, I would recommend that when your son or daughter reaches 14, you start them on regular large enemas, for their own good. I became so used to these large enema growing up, that today I have no difficulty holding 4 or even 5 quart enemas for 15 to 20 minutes. Large volume enemas are very beneficial. From Martina - Germany - 2002.

The doctor of our family, an old lady who believed in natural treatment, told my parents about high enemas for the treatment my bad acne. From this time on (I was 13) I got enemas on a regular basis twice a week. There were two treatments: on Wednesday I got a ‘small series’: 1 quart soapsuds, followed by two 2-quart herbal tea enemas. On weekends I got the “real good cleansing”. After a small 1,5 - quart soapsud enema mom and aunt gave me a light soapsud-enema of 3 quarts. When I was 16 they increased the volume to between 4 and 5 quarts. I had to hold these enemas for 20 minutes. Then came 3 or 4 tap water enemas (with baking soda) of 3 quart each. Helmuth 2002

I’m from Italy. My mom gave me enemas for health reasons. I got one or two a month. Mom used a white enamelled 2 liter can, filled to the brim with soapsuds, for the first enema. Then followed 2 enemas of 2 liters of clear water. The 4th and last enema was of camomile and fennel tea. From the age of 13 the last enema was 4 liters, and from the age of 15 was 5 liters. Raffaela.- 2004.
Are some people able to hold the 6 quart maximum recommended for high enemas?

The High Enema - In the high enema the water is forced much further up the bowels and some ten pints [10 Imperial pints = 6 liters] of water are used, but **it is wise to get this treatment under professional care, otherwise it is possible to do harm.** Many people feel this type of apparatus holds the key to their health and are very disappointed when they are unable to get such treatment. Although unwilling to condemn this attitude entirely, I feel that better results could be had by a closer attention to diet. .................... From About the Water Cure - Russel Sneddon 1965.

According to the records of Medical clinics in Boston, Hartford and NYC, during the period 1885 to 1920, a large number of women were given a 4 quart enema of strong soapsuds followed by a high saline enema of 5 to 7 quarts, once a week or more often. A colon tube was used. From S.J. – 2005.

I'm from Northern Germany. Mom gave me an enema every week. She believed that only full capacity enemas are good enemas. At the age of 13 or 14 mom increased the volume of my enemas. After one cleansing enema of 2.5 liters of soapsuds, which I had to hold for 15 minutes, two clear water enemas followed. Then she slowly gave me a very full 4 liter enema of herbal tea.

At the age of 17 when my mother told the doctor that she gave me 4 liter enemas which I could hold for 15 minutes, he told her that she should try to increase the volume of my enemas. Mother was encouraged by this advice. Mom was very strict and a good teacher, and on the very first attempt, she urged me to continue the enema until I was very full holding 6 liters. In spite of being very uncomfortable, I had to hold these enemas for 15 minutes. When I was 19 mom taught me to take these high enemas by myself. I saw a doctor recently and he told me that my colon was OK. When I told him that I take regular weekly enemas of 6 liters, as my mother had taught me, he was impressed and said that I could continue with these enemas provided I did not experience any pain. From Julia F - 2003.

My step-mother gave me three high enemas of 3 to 4 quarts with me bent over the bath, every day from age 10 until I left home at 19. I learned to enjoy these daily enemas. Now I use high enemas about 3 to 4 times a week, mostly with the help of my girlfriend. I regularly take 6 liters delivered using a large volume white bag. We agree that large volume high enemas are both great for your health and very enjoyable. From Mutley – Australia – 2003.

My mother gave me frequent enemas from the age of 2 using a 2 quart enema bag. She always continued each enema until I was feeling very full. When I was a teenager I took enemas of 4 quarts whenever home alone. Even though I am a senior citizen, I still take one or two large volume enemas of at least 4 quarts and up to 6 ½ quarts (6 liters) every 2 or 3 days, without needing to take any smaller preliminary enemas. I am in excellent health. I’m 5’11”, weigh 176lbs, so am somewhat of a slight build. From Bill.

I live in North Carolina USA. I got my first enema when I was 20 at a health spa in Mexico. My new husband’s mother owned and operated it. He left me there while he was on business. By the second week they had me up to 5 liters and by the third week I was taking 6 liters. Now my husband gives me a 6 liter enema every week, and I don’t mind a bit. I have four daughters aged 18, 16, 14 and 12, who all take large volume enemas. From Sandy - 2003.
I’m a 50 year old Type 1 Diabetic, diagnosed in September of 1987. This means that I must take daily insulin injections to stay alive. Constipation became a huge problem and I was not having a bowel movement for 4 or 5 days at a time. I began using over-the-counter fibre supplements, stool softeners, laxatives and those skimpy enemas. Nothing worked. After trying and getting good results from a professional colonic irrigation treatment, because of the high cost, I decided on using high enemas at home. I purchased a 6-quart amber enema bag. I start each day with three enemas of 6 quarts each. The results are amazing. I have no more constipation, a clean toxic free gut, lower blood pressure, better blood sugar readings, no straining trying to eliminate a hard dry stool and a great disposition. Through home colon cleansing, my life and health have changed so much for the better that I wish I had discovered it long ago. The health aspect is important for everyone, but for a diabetic it is a Godsend. From Mike Evosevich.

Are some adults unable to hold high enemas of 4 quarts?

A young woman used to come to the clinic in a very constipated state. She was about 30 years old, 4’11” and weighed just about 100 lbs. She had been given her first enema, a barium enema at a Boston clinic a few years back. She said that she kept reliving the experience for some months before she finally got a douche bag and starting giving herself enemas regularly. She said that she would usually refill the bag, and take 2500ml to 3000ml before she felt as full as she did when receiving the barium enema. She always wanted me to give her 3 full enemas, instead of a colonic. I had her lie on her left side to start the enema, and then rolled her onto her back, and finally her right side. In spite of her constipated state she usually took 2500ml without asking me to stop the flow. For her second or third enema, she sometimes took 3000ml and on two occasions managed as much as 3300ml. Despite her distended condition, she held each enema in for 8 minutes. When she got off the table she was very expanded, and looked as if she were about 6 months pregnant. You could actually see outline of her colon. From Anon. Colon Therapist - 2000. (1000ml equals one quart.)

Both Marvin and I have been taking and giving each other enemas for 26 years and neither of us can take 4-quarts. Even after a good cleansing enema my maximum capacity is 3 quarts and Marvin’s is 3 ½ quarts. If you can take 4 quarts all well and good but not everybody can take 4-quarts. Everybody’s body is different, so for a high enema, take as much as you can working through the cramps and pressure by being relaxed, using correct position, breath control and a very slow water flow. It’s not unusual for us to take 30 to 40 minutes for the injection; haste makes for an early expulsion, before the colon has been completely filled. From Marlene - 2001.

Anna was having lower back pains and symptoms of a clogged-up lower digestive tract. Our goal, according to Kloss’s book, was multiple 4 quart fillings until she ran clear. Jethro Kloss in the book, Back to Eden, points out that different individuals have differing capacities, and although I can hold up to the 4 quarts that he recommends, I think Anna is one who will never reach it. A 2 quart enema is the absolute maximum that she can hold. Anna eventually achieved her first complete cleansing session with seven enemas of two quarts each. She felt better and more energized than she had in months and decided that such treatments should be done on a regular basis. From E-Sig Library - 1997.
Have Full Enemas Been Recommended For Daily Treatments With Beneficial Results?

Most people think they are not constipated because they have a bowel movement almost every day, accomplished without straining. I have even had clients tell me that they have a bowel movement once a week, and they are quite certain that they are not constipated. The most surprising thing to novice fasters is that repeated enemas or colonics during fasting begins to release many pounds of undeniably real, old, caked fecal matter and/or huge mucus strings. The first-time faster can hardly believe these were present. These old fecal deposits do not come out the first time one has enemas or necessarily the fifth time. And all of them will not be removed by the tenth enema. But over the course of extended fasting or a long spell of light raw food eating with repeated daily enemas, amazing changes do begin to occur. It seems that no one who has eaten a civilized diet has escaped the formation of caked deposits lining the colon’s walls, interfering with its function. This material does not respond to laxatives or casually administered enemas.

Enemas can do no damage and pose no risk except to that rare individual with weak spots in the colon’s wall from cancers. When an enema is perceived to be unpleasant, the correct name for the experience is discomfort, not pain. Keep in mind that pain is the body’s warning that actual damage is being done to tissues. You may have to work at increasing your tolerance for discomfort or it will take you a long time to achieve the goal of totally filling the colon with water. Be brave! And relax.

An average colon empty of new food will usually hold about 4 quarts of water. That is the average. A small colon might only hold 3 quarts, a large one might accept 6 quarts, or even more. You could make your own enema can from a two gallon plastic bucket with a small plastic hose barb glued into a hole drilled in the bottom or lower edge.

The difference between helpful and potentially harmful enemas lies in the amount of water injected and the frequency of use. Using a cup or two of water to induce a bowel movement may eventually cause dependency, will not strengthen the colon and may after years of this practice, result in distention and enlargement of the rectum or sigmoid colon. However, a completely empty average-sized colon has the capacity of about a gallon [4 liters] of water. When increasingly larger enemas are administered until the injection of close to a gallon of water is achieved, beneficial exercise and an increase in overall muscle tone are the results.

Correctly given, enemas serve as strengthening exercises for the colon. This long tubular muscle is repeatedly and completely filled with an average of a gallon of water, inducing it to vigorously exercise. The result is a great increase in muscle tone, acceleration of peristalsis and eventually, after several dozens of repetitions [of one enema a day], a considerable reduction of transit time. From How and When to Be Your Own Doctor - Dr. Isabelle A. Moser with Steve Solomon June, 1997.

The copious enema - The purpose of this mode of applying the enema is to introduce the largest quantity of water possible to fill the entire colon without overdistending it. Four to six quarts (liters) are often used. Frequently quantities of old putrefying faecal masses, semi-hardened by long retention, make their appearance after a copious enema has been thoroughly administered every day for a week or more, showing that a single flushing of the colon, no matter how thorough, is not sufficient to achieve effective cleansing. In this class of patients the copious enema should be administered daily for two or three weeks if necessary, while the patient complains of gaseous distention of the bowels and fetid flatulence. From Home Handbook of Domestic Hygiene and Rational Medicine - J.H.Kellogg M.D. 1903
Are full capacity enemas suitable for long-term daily use?

When the enema is employed daily for a prolonged period, as frequently happens, two quarts of water should be the maximum quantity used. This should not be taken, however, as advice against the use of a full hot enema in those cases where it is truly beneficial.

The colon has a capacity of a gallon [4 liters] or more, when not filled with faeces, or the residue that will become faeces. This complete filling of the colon is absolutely essential to its effective cleansing. As a means of temporarily remedying chronic constipation, this method cannot be improved upon. It can be highly recommended when one is suffering from a sudden attack of acute disease. Frequently, attacks of acute illness can be almost immediately be relieved by this one measure. Where an acute illness is being treated and there are symptoms at all serious in nature, it is advisable to use all the water the patient can hold for a few minutes; for under such circumstances the bowels are more thoroughly cleansed and the process of eliminating poisons is continued more actively.

Full enemas, which should be used on numerous occasions because of their exceptional value, are, however, somewhat weakening in their influence. Where the patient is weak [to start with] I would use a moderately full enema of 2 to 4 quarts of water. Whenever you give a very full enema, [4 to 6 quarts], almost all that the colon can hold, one that leaves the patient weak and languid, then a rest would be required before any further treatment.

From Encyclopaedia of Health and Physical Culture - B. Macfadden - 1926 & 1940

**Conclusion.**

The idea that water irritates the bowel wall is absurd; nor can the water wash away any necessary secretions from the bowel wall. The argument that enemas promote constipation does not stand up under careful investigation. I have never seen a case where a long series of enemas or irrigations failed to improve later bowel activity. I believe that the chief value in this therapy, however, is not simply in emptying the colon, but in cleaning infected and degenerated areas in the bowel wall which are more or less common to all adults, areas through which infection and toxins enter the lymphatics and blood stream, carrying disease to our hearts, liver, kidneys and other organs. From Man Alive You’re Half Dead - Dr. D.C. Munro 1953

Enemas and colonics have been used for treating various conditions. Enemas relieve constipation, diarrhoea, dysentery, painful menstruation, depression, toxicity, colitis, diverticulosis, common migraines, tension headaches, acne, allergies and fevers. They are used in preparation for childbirth, as well as just to maximize health. There is virtually no harm only good in an appropriately administered enema. As a doctor I have supervised and given hundreds of patients enemas. Those enemas have always been given with gentleness until the patient is filled. They are persuaded to take hold of as much water as possible not by command, but by encouragement. This is always a mutual effort.

The giving and receiving of enemas on a relatively frequent basis is not historically very harmful. Doctor John Harvey Kellogg MD, is reported to have taken a daily colonic irrigation for many years. He was actively practicing medicine till into his nineties. Daily irrigations, which are much more washing than a simple enema would have caused some ill effect far before this age if it was going to. That this man took so many colon cleansings and lived far longer and better than his contempories tends to prove that the regular use of well designed and proper temperature enemas
are not harmful but rather helpful. **Over the years I have come across a number of people who have taken enemas on a daily basis for as long as 70 years, up to the age of 90 or more, with no adverse effects. Cleansing the colon seems to enhance health and longevity.**

The opposition to colonic irrigations or home enemas, based on the farce of protecting the public is ludicrous. The public is in far more danger from almost all over-the-counter medications than it is from colon cleansing. Throughout several thousand years of human history enemas have been given. There is, to my knowledge, in that entire time no record of a properly given enema or series of enemas causing any harm. Thus a properly given enema has proven to cause less harm than almost all modern medications or treatments. From Enemas and Colonics - Dr. J. G. Knox, BA, DC 1996

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THE END

See next page for instructions on the safest way to take enemas to full capacity.
Safety Precautions and Suggestions for Taking Full Capacity Enemas

Before undergoing any colon cleansing procedure, please confirm by Medical investigation that you do not suffer from any of the following conditions:-

Malignancies of the intestinal tract.
Any gastrointestinal disorder that makes perforation a likelihood.
Anal disease, such as severe haemorrhoids, strictures, fissures, etc.
High blood pressure or fluid retention problems.
Severe cardiovascular disease.
Abdominal aneurisms and arteriosclerosis, phlebitis, thrombosis, or where there is a tendency to haemorrhage.
Severely debilitating diseases.
Severe anaemias and exophthalmic goitre.
Diverticulitis, ulcerative colitis, Crohn’s disease.


Avoiding Nausea.
The internal bath should not be used within three hours of eating a full meal; because if both the stomach and the transverse colon are distended at the same time they press against each other; and since the stomach is the more sensitive of the two, nausea is probable. Just before retiring at night is by far the most convenient time to take it. From The Royal Road - Charles A. Tyrrell, M.D. - 395th Ed 1947.

The Safest Solution to Use.
“Beware of using tap water or a soap solution, especially when large quantities of water are used. Soap solutions result in unnecessary irritations of the colon and plain water risks upsetting the sugar and salt balance in the blood, which can result in great tiredness and even total collapse. Solutions used for enemas should contain a teaspoonful of table salt to each liter of water used.”

From Claire Boewer - Colonic Clinic - Munich.

Ideal Rate of Flow and Temperature.
The level of the bag is recommended to be 18 to 24 inches (50 cms) above the level of the anus. This is a good height. At this height the flow into the rectum is almost imperceptible. [If the flow stops, the can may be raised, but never more than one meter above the body.] The ideal temperature for a full enema is 103 F. To avoid damage to the colon never exceed 110 F. From Enemas and Colonics - Dr. J. G. Knox. BA, DC 1996

A Comfortable Position to Adopt
Have the patient lie on the back, knees flexed. When there is pain, shut off the water and let the patient roll from one side to the other, and resume after a few moment’s rest. Sometimes there is a kink in the colon, and many times just a change in position allows a great deal more water to flow in. From Back To Eden - Jethro Kloss - 1939. Revised and expanded 1988.
Quantities Required.

An average colon empty of new food will usually hold about 4 quarts of water. That is the average. A small colon might only hold 3 quarts, a large one might accept 6 quarts, or even more. You could make your own enema can from a two gallon plastic bucket with a small plastic hose barb glued into a hole drilled in the bottom or lower edge. From How and When to Be Your Own Doctor - Dr. Isabelle A. Moser with Steve Solomon June, 1997.

The Use of Smaller Enemas First, Before Filling the Colon Completely.

The best plan in commencing treatment is to use one to one and a half quarts for the first night, for the next night two or three quarts and by the third or fourth night the full quantity (3 to 4 quarts) should be taken. From The Royal Road - Charles A. Tyrrell, M.D. - 395th Ed 1947.

Using Available Enema Bags or Cans to Fill the Colon.

To use standard (two quart) enema bags, I recommend that you buy a combination douche enema syringe that is an open topped bag with the hoses connecting to the bottom, or a hospital enema can. Prepare a [4 quart] pitcher or container of water and have it close by when giving an enema. After you have almost emptied the bag, close the cut off and pour in another bag full. Repeat this [with a 3rd bag full if necessary] until your patient has to stop because they are unable to hold any more enema. From Enemas and Colonics - Dr. J. G. Knox. BA, DC 1996

Avoiding Plugs or Inflatable Nozzles When Retaining a Full Enema.

[For most adults] As soon as the colon is clean you will be able to hold the full four quarts. You must try again and again until this is possible. After withdrawing the tip, fold a towel and press tightly over the anus for a few minutes to aid in its retention. Four quarts can be injected if care is used, and can be retained for ten to fifteen minutes. You may have to repeat this several times before the entire colon is cleansed. From Back To Eden - Jethro Kloss - 1988.

When using a high enema, it is vital not to obstruct the rectal sphincter. You should not use a retention nozzle or rectal plug to let you hold more inside than safety warrants. From Jim Hollomon - 1996.

Recognizing the Variability of Adult Capacities.

If you do not find it possible to retain four quarts of water, even after thoroughly cleansing the colon, don’t worry. In this case take as much as possible. Sometimes the colon has no direct relationship to the size of the individual. A large person may have a relatively short narrow colon that can only hold one or two quarts, while a small person may have a large, long colon capable of holding three or four quarts. Back To Eden - Jethro Kloss - 1939. Revised and expanded 1988.

The Dangers of Excessively Large Enemas?

It should be self-evident that the amount of water to be injected should be limited to the natural capacity of the colon. [From 3 to 6 quarts.] Many people have used such large quantities of water for such long periods of time, that their capacity is enormous. [More than 6 quarts.] This, however, is not their normal capacity, and one beginning the use of the enema for special effects and conditions should not be led into forcibly injecting very large quantities simply because of what someone else in an abnormal condition can do. Very large enemas might easily result in permanent dilatation of the colon. From Encyclopaedia of Health and Physical Culture - B. Macfadden - 1940.
Stop Using Enemas If Any of the Signs Below Occur..

Most people need to take at least three quarts for an effective enema. However, in giving larger enemas, do be careful. If the patient becomes dizzy, or feels bad after a large enema, stop the process. From Enemas and Colonics - Dr. J. G. Knox. BA, DC 1996.

In a very small number of patients the colon will prove to be so spastic and irritable that it will contract forcefully and painfully and expel the fluid and perhaps even the enema tip as well. If this should continue to occur after several gentle attempts on different days to introduce the enema solution, or if any blood is noted in the material evacuated from the colon at any time, competent medical advice should be obtained. From Back To Eden - Jethro Kloss - 1988.

Frequency of Full Enemas.

Thorough cleansing of the colon requires several enemas. I feel that this may be the best way to have occasional enemas. I would not recommend it more than once a week, unless under a competent doctor’s direction. If you want to have a clean colon, it certainly makes sense to spend an evening or morning taking a series of enemas until the more undigested food from the cecum washes out. This is a necessity for the treatment of constipation and illness. ...........

From Enemas and Colonics - Dr. J. G. Knox. BA, DC 1996

Strong soapy solutions, alcohol or other harmful additions to the water for an enema, long and thick rectal nozzles, long colon tubes, the forced retention of excessive quantities by means of inflatable nozzles and the injection of air with the water can all be dangerous and should be strictly avoided. Unfortunately some suppliers on the INTERNET have adopted a very irresponsible approach and specialised enema accessories, which should really only be used by professionals, are advertised and can be ordered by anyone who has a credit card. If enemas are to continue to be used safely as a home treatment, they should be used responsibly and guarded from abuse. The Compiler.

Note: The Compiler does not assume responsibility for the use or misuse of the information contained in these notes. The opinions and recommendations expressed are those of the original authors. Before undergoing any form of colon cleansing please consult a Medical doctor for any of serious medical condition. If you are in any doubt about the safety of using large volume enemas, please seek the services of a certified colon therapist.

Send any feedback to howham1@hotmail.com

See next page for full references.
Sources


About the Water Cure - An explanation of hydrotherapy - Russel Sneddon Health for All Publishing Co. 1965.


How and When to Be Your Own Doctor - Dr. Isabelle A. Moser with Steve Solomon June, 1997. (Only Published on the Internet. Use Google.com to search for the title.)

See the next page for the scientific basis for the beneficial effects of enemas.
The Scientific Basis For the Beneficial Effects of Enemas by Jillie.

The conventionally modern medical view of enemas/suppositories is essentially that they just empty the lower colon, and that although constipation might possibly cause such side effects as irritability arising from the discomfort of physical bowel distension (especially among hypochondriacs), those who venture farther and claim as either patient or as fringe practitioner much more general efficacy for enemas are yokels who have not understood the germ theory of disease, or weirdos who will grasp at any excuse to indulge in a deep-seated perversion. Notwithstanding their practices, even most participants in this forum seem to accept this general argument – not surprisingly, given the authority of the establishment which promulgates it. However, this is so physiologically simplistic as to be medically uninformed. So, as they say: Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free....

Our grandmothers were not the first to claim far-ranging benefits from enemas. A very long history recommends enemas to improve immunity and to relieve headaches and minor ailments ostensibly distinct from the digestive system. While this is anecdotal, it is venerable and suggests that it might deserve more study than the dismissive response of recent conventional medicine. For example, an ancient Ayurvedic (Indian) remedy for relief of migraine – temporarily, as to allow sleep – was a simple enema, not for any supposed connection to constipation, but because this was said to get the vital essences flowing from the intestinal chakra, where they were stuck, up to the head chakra where they were needed. This seems nonsensical to any ‘modern’ reader, as it did to me when I first came upon it; but allow me return to this in just a moment.

Any number of people have appreciated enemas for inducing a feeling of both physical and psychological refreshment, lightness, relaxation, and even pleasure (entirely beyond the optional enjoyment of Extra Benefits). Singer Kenny Loggins found them to so readily dissolve away tension that he married his colonic therapist (writing in ‘It Worked For Me’). Those with a lifestyle that permits indulgence, largely entertainers, commend enemas as contributing to their vitality and sense of well-being in unexpected numbers (Mae West, Doris Day...). I personally had a friend who found that Dulcolax-type suppositories reliably turned away a state of serious mental imbalance of which she could sense the onset. And I know immediately when my husband is in a bad mood that an enema or suppository will relieve whether or not he is constipated. It is possible to explain away effects such as these by positing some connection to control and potty training (or simple imagination) – surely, Freud would have! But more modern research suggests much more interesting alternatives or supplementals.

Endocrinologists have found in the last fifteen years, surprisingly to those outside their narrow specialty but now established as a mainstream but little-known fact, that serotonin and some forty other neurotransmitters, normally thought of as mood or brain chemicals from their most obvious effects, all live overwhelmingly in the intestines rather than the brain (perhaps 95% vs 2%), and that these chemicals primarily play a vital role in the immune system (for example, they fill cell receptors to which viruses can otherwise attach). When I first heard a doctor claiming this (on PBS) I suspected that he was a ‘visionary’ (to be polite) – until he was identified as the Dean of Molecular Biology at Columbia University. (See, for example, his ‘The Second Brain’ by Dr. Michael Gershon mentioning this aspect of the intestines.) Since then I have confirmed these claims as standard in writings of many others in this specialty of medical scholarship.
The actual mechanisms and reasonable attempts at explanation for this apparently odd juxtaposition of physiological systems are still being worked out. Some neurotransmitters are even known already to be specifically effective against certain cancers (for example, serotonin and Burkitt’s Lymphoma, if I recall correctly).

Oversimplified, one doctor suggests that the intestines regulate these chemicals, normally dispersing them to fortify the immune system (and getting enough to the brain to signal serendipity), but keeping them close at hand when needed to fight invaders at the intestines – the primary site of biochemical exchange – and when other problems get the bowels out of whack.

With this new knowledge as a backdrop, it is not hard to extrapolate putative routes by which enemas or bowel stimulation might be widely beneficial. The Ayurvedic migraine recipe appears astonishingly exact in all but its terminology: restated, the enema stimulates the intestine to release neurotransmitters throughout the body, resulting also in an increase in the brain. Now we are bordering on speculation since research is new, but enemas could even prove reasonable to try before calling in the Prozac (which increases brain serotonin by a much less benign mechanism). The possible efficacy claimed for coffee enemas in cancer treatment (now being studied with government funding, though volunteers have been hard to enlist) also makes some sense, although I do not know that the coffee actually adds benefit.

I admit to having no special medical training, but I believe that it is no longer untenable to propose that enemas might be directly beneficial to conditions ranging from moodiness to immune boosting directly, beyond simple benefits of inducing elimination. It is too early to draw provable recommendations for wider use of enemas, but clearly if they seem helpful for you, there’s likely to be a valid physiological basis, whether or not your physician is yet aware of this.

Although the serious research here is just beginning, the messages of immediate interest to this forum are: (1) That if it feels good and you are careful, it probably IS good as well as pleasant; and (2) that you can confidently rephrase the discourse from ‘I like enemas for some weirdly perverted reason (although some people in the Ozarks and the middle ages think they’re good for you)’ – the stand which most here have been cowed into – to ‘Enemas seem to have surprisingly beneficial uses (and I actually like them)’ – which is a whole sea-change and step toward personal liberation: the idiosyncracies of the ways you enjoy them become something of an afterthought rather than the focus (and can be pursued appropriately once you have established levels of comfort and safety).

Your grandmother might not have been an endocrinologist, but she wasn’t an idiot either. Conventional medicine, still barely aware of the implications of this endocrinology, knows what it knows, but no more than that – and must not foreclose consideration of entirely unexpected mechanisms of physiological action.

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