

Clearing a Path

By Niamh Fitzgerald

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Having suffered with constipation for years, I decided to cleanse my colon using colonic irrigation, natural supplements and a radical diet overhaul. In two weeks (and with the aid of 6 colonic irrigation treatments) I lost over 15 pounds in weight which I believe was mainly impacted stool which had built up in my system. It made sense to me, if I wasn't passing it, where else was it going to go? Having cleansed my colon I felt younger and more energetic. With a whole new outlook on life I decided to study natural healing and to help people control this uncomfortable symptom.

The most common advice given for the treatment of chronic constipation is to increase dietary fibre and water consumption. I have found that while adding bulk and hydration to the stool is important in the treatment of constipation, it is only part of the solution to the puzzle.

The colon is made up of three layers of muscle which lose their strength if they are not used on a daily basis. Also, once the contents of the colon reach over 5 pounds in weight the transverse colon tends to collapse or prolapse. It is much more difficult for stool to pass through a colon which is atonal and out of shape. Inversion board exercises or yoga postures like head or shoulder stands help to right the position of a prolapsed colon, but something still needs to be done to remove the years of build-up!

Here's the three step program that we use in our clinics:

1. DIETARY CHANGES

- Plant based foods feed good bacteria and animal foods contain and feed unhealthy bacteria. Try to keep your diet 80% plant based and to eat smaller portions of meat.
- Reduce or eliminate mucus forming foods, the two most mucus forming foods are cows milk and white bread.
- Eat small amounts of starchy foods like potatoes and pasta, cook with aromatic herbs to help move them through your system.
- Replace regular tea and coffee which are dehydrating with herbal teas and water.

- Add lubricating healthy oils into your diet. Use olive oil for dressings and coconut oil for cooking.
- Nuts, seeds, beans and grains are high in fibre and beneficial, however they contain enzyme inhibitors which makes them difficult to digest. Soaking these foods overnight destroys enzyme inhibitors.

2. NATURAL SUPPLEMENTS

- Magnesium is required for proper nerve and muscle function and one of the first symptoms of magnesium deficiency is constipation. I have found this supplement to be invaluable in the treatment of constipation. Take 300mg of Magnesium citrate at night.
- Probiotics, or good bacteria, are needed to complete the process of digestion. Probiotics also importantly produce lactic acid which keeps the colon slightly acidic and in turn triggers a bowel movement. Take one capsule on an empty stomach (each containing 5 billion organisms with at least 8 strains).
- Herbal cleansers: it is important to use something to help to break down the old hardened stool in the digestive system. Aloe vera is a simple colon cleansing herb which is gentle and well tolerated. We use a Master Herbalist blend of herbs to cleanse and tone the colon.

3. COLONIC IRRIGATION

While it is possible to achieve results through diet and supplements alone, colonic irrigation speeds up results and helps to reduce the side effects of colon cleansing (cramping, gas, bloating and headaches). Colonic irrigation removes the same amount of stool as about 20 normal bowel movements. The gentle action of the water also exercises the colon and helps to tone it. For chronic constipation, it is recommended that you have six treatments over the course of 2-4 weeks.

Note: All supplements mentioned in this article are available at Oscailt, 8 Pembroke Road, Dublin 4. A course of six colonics including the supplements are available at Oscailt for the special price of €500.