

IBS & COLONICS – my comments on extracts from reviews by those living with IBS

Just who are the experts in IBS? Well as a colon hydro therapist I have seen a goodly number of people with IBS, but I (Julia) would not class myself as an expert. Colon hydrotherapy is simply an adjunct health oriented strategy not a medical strategy.

In my opinion the real experts are those with the condition.

There are various forums on the web where IBS sufferers share their experiences. One such web space is IBS TALES FORUM set up by Sophie Lee, who describes herself as a *reluctant expert* in the condition (having lived with IBS for over 20 years).

If you read the stories on this very comprehensive blog, you will gain a perspective on this condition. (Be warned however that there is a lot of information, so it may feel like information overload.)

So what's my point of view as a colon therapist?

Colonics can help- *definitely*.

Is it a miracle cure? Hardly. Is it going work just by itself? Very probably not.

Is colon therapy going have some temporary discomfort associated with it for those with IBS? From time to time, very probably.

On Sophie's forum, there are 21 quite detailed reviews of colonics from people with IBS; there are sixteen *-5 star reviews*, four- *4 star reviews*, and one *-2 star reviews*.

So, overwhelmingly, this small sample of users found colonics helped, when almost nothing else did. There is a lot to be learned by analysing their reviews.

Below I quote *extracts* from some of the reviews with *my comments*.

1. ‘.... It’s a slow process but I’m determined to have (them) regularly fortnightly or even weekly. I’ve been down the western medical track and I’ve not had much success.

I use the *closed* colonics method because I prefer to have the therapist with me doing the full treatment for me; rather than the *open* method where the therapist sets it up and then you administer it yourself. My therapist is gentle, patient and suggests other methods in between treatments. Pear juice and flaxseed oil are a good start...’

Comment:

Yes, recovering bowel functionality is a slow process, however it really takes a lot less time to recover health, than it took to lose it...When we do things to support the design principles of the body (i.e. how its intended to work) health recovery and well being starts coming back. It’s what one does most of the time that matters. Focus on health, and it will come.

Many people who come to colonics do so because they have not had much joy with the conventional medical route.

I use the closed system. In my experience, many with IBS have a preference for ongoing colon therapist support during the treatment. There is also only one client at a time in the WLC clinic, so privacy is guaranteed. That’s important too.

Gentleness, patience are keywords. Colon whispering *demands* such an approach.

Colonics are part of an integrated approach, and making appropriate dietary and lifestyle choices is fundamental to recovery. Changes introduced mindfully, with consistent adherence is the preferred way to go.

2. ‘ (...This testimony covers a period of more than 30 years...)’

‘.... Since the five colonic hydrotherapy sessions my stomach feels better, the constipation and gas are getting better slowly, my face is clearing up, and the spots stopped itching and are fading. The colonic sessions may not be the total answer but they have helped when nothing else did. I have decided to sign up for another package of five...’

Comment:

This reviewer has noticed the systemic effect of colonics (on the skin), as well as on their primary condition (bowel health). They are realistic about the role of colonics (i.e. its not the total answer), and are taking from it what it can give (i.e. immediate help at a point of last resort).

Importantly, the reviewer knows that judicious repetition of colonics (a well

planned series of them) is crucial for consolidating benefits. Otherwise, it can be one step forward, two backwards.

3.4.... I went for the colonic. The therapist set me at ease, and put me on the colonic machine with a hot water bottle on my tummy.

For the first 15 minutes or so nothing much happened...then I experienced some truly uncomfortable cramping. The therapist rubbed my abdomen with some essential oils and then I released a whole lot of something. Suddenly I felt a whole lot better. Instantly the fatigue, negative outlook, and feeling yucky vanished. Afterwards the therapist asked me if I wanted to see what had released...black hard sticky-looking stuff and impacted mucous. I felt amazing. Even after no solid real food for seven days I suddenly felt very energetic and also lighter, both physically and mentally.

I returned the next day for another session. This one was very uncomfortable. I released less, but felt even better than I did after the first session. My belly bloat was virtually gone. My skin is even clearing up and looks glowing. My appetite is better, I don't get nauseous after eating and I feel better than I have in years...I would recommend it to anyone who suffers from IBS or diverticulitis

Comment:

The hot water bottle can help when a person isn't very relaxed. This is where the experienced and caring hydro therapist comes into their own. There are all sorts of things that they can offer that helps in the session. But its important to develop an therapeutic rapport, and to understand that these measures place an additional time and other expense on the therapist which they would need to be reflected in their fee. Someone with IBS should select their colon hydro therapist with care, and be prepared to pay for any additional support. Its well worth doing this, because in this context colonics are much more than a mechanical process. It moves to being both a science and art.

The reviewers report "*Instantly the fatigue, negative outlook, and feeling yucky vanished ... I suddenly felt very energetic and also lighter, both physically and mentally*" is a positive indication of the law of healing occurring -as per Hering, i.e. healing occurring in the head space first in terms of better outlook on life. (I have written in more detail on Herings law of cure separately).

What gets released. Black icky stuff, etc. Medics sometimes say the body needs no help getting rid of toxins, they say the body is very efficient doing so on its own. May be so, for a body that's in optimal functioning mode. But I beg to differ when it comes to many of us. Just like a car with a flat battery we need a jump-start. A series of colonics does just that.

Reduction in belly bloat is common. Why? Release not just of solid matter, but also of gas build up.

Skin better; very common occurrence. After all the skin doubles up as an excretory organ, and tries to compensate when the colon and liver are over taxed. So when the burden on it reduces, it looks all the better for it.

Return of appetite. This is unsurprising. When the system is backed up, who would feel like taking more input (food)? A release allows the body to take in food as nutrition.

4. '...I went in for a series of colonics, and I would recommend them to everyone! My therapist also had me do a three-day cleanse of grapefruit followed by apples and celery, all cut up into tiny bite-size pieces. The first evening my husband said 'Wow, you are feeling a lot better aren't you?' Yes, I felt great! And three days later I felt even better!'

Comment:

The key ideas here (for me) are: a series...(one is not enough usually); cleansing regimen; digestible food; immediate relief and continuing benefit (if lifestyle factors are maintained)

5. '...I've been suffering with IBS for just under a year, since my granddad died, and I find the best thing for me is having colonics. When I had my first session absolutely nothing came out, and I was quite disappointed. However I persevered as the therapist told me too, and after the fourth session everything started moving and I was having massive releases...'

Comment:

Not much evident effect from the first session- yes, this is sometimes the case, especially when colon is very dehydrated.

TTT is a good slogan: Things take time!

6. '...A lot of material came out.... it felt very mushy and thick. It was a tremendous relief after it had come out...I felt fantastic. All cramping gone, all memories of cramping and pain gone and replaced by this wonderful light feeling. I paid for six more sessions! That day I was pretty tired. I of course replaced my electrolytes and took probiotics.

By the next day I felt awesome and I have felt much less tired overall since. I went to my second session a few days later. There was much less cramping. It was still difficult in spots but much less came out, and the 45 minutes went by a lot more quickly. I am planning on doing the next two back to back. I already feel so different. I am not as tired, bloated, or in pain as I was. My head doesn't feel foggy and I have less lower back pain! I don't know any long-term effects yet. It has only been a week.....'

Comments:

This is really quite a typical report for someone with IBS to give. The cramping effects can be reduced by preparatory measures, but probably not eliminated altogether. Some temporary discomfort is a price most people think is well worth the price of the longer-term sense of wellbeing.

7. Then I read the book Natural Cures. I followed the advice under 'bloating, gas, and heartburn'. This advice included doing a colon cleanse, as well as doing colonics. Within two weeks I was a new person. My headaches disappeared, depression gone

and fatigue gone. I no longer took two-hour naps every day. My bloating went away and I rarely suffer from extreme gas anymore. Now, when I eat, I no longer bloat after the meal. Of course, if I eat something bad for me, such as dairy or sugar, my stomach doesn't feel good, but it's to a much lesser degree.

Comments:

Key points: self-education, willingness to try things out for oneself.

Self-responsibility. Playing the detective- what works well, what to do differently.

8. “I bought six colonics. In the beginning, my stomach was mostly filled with gas bubbles. After the third colonic, I gave up my deadly habit of diet sodas. I was able to kick it so easily, as I had tried for years but to no avail. If the colonics are simply a placebo effect, then it has all been worth it, just to kick the soda habit alone. Around the fourth colonic, massive waste starting coming out of my body. I make sure that I take a probiotic afterwards in order to replenish the good bacteria...’

Comment:

The key points: a series of colonics; gas common as predominant feature in the early colonic releases; the power of 3 (the real effects typically happen between 3 to 6 colonics into the series); importance of probiotics.

9....I had a colonic about five months ago because I've had severe IBS constipation for years and nothing will help me. When I went to get the colonic done it was extremely painful and I was so nauseated I thought I was going to pass out. Hardly any waste came out of my body even though I haven't been able to have a complete bowel movement for several weeks now. I was still severely constipated after it was done. I was hoping it would help since my IBS is so severe but sadly it didn't...’

Comments:

Here is someone who (understandably) hoped for a quick result from a single colonic; however ...TTT (things take time). A series of colonics was indicated. In conventional medicine, a doctor would tell you off if you didn't take a course of medicated for the prescribed time. Colonics are not a medical intervention, they are a health restorative intervention – they too have an effect based on frequency and duration of treatment, over time.

10. ‘.... I did six treatments in a row and then went once a month. About four years ago my life took a turn, losing both my parents in the same year. I have the same symptoms I did six years ago. I called and started my colonic treatments over again. I have had about seven treatments and they seem to be the only thing that really works for my IBS. All the medications in the world mask the symptoms, but I find the colonics really help me feel better mentally...’

Comments:

The colon responds negatively to stressors, particularly when its already been

weakened.

This reviewer came to colon hydrotherapy as a port of last resort. They are realistic in understanding that the level of dysfunctionality of their bowel isn't a quick fix. But it's proven worthwhile... for this person at least.

11.'.... For the first 20 minutes I had basically the same results, clear liquid and lots of bubbles (gas). After massaging my colon area, we gradually started seeing black particles being released, and then the water was brown and black at some points. Oh, it was a wonderful feeling seeing months and months of waste material being released.

Because my condition is chronic, she recommended coming once a week. Yes it is expensive, but I'm looking at the overall and long-term benefit. I am truly going to put forth an effort to change my eating habits. It's amazing how she was able to tell that I eat lots of fatty acids, starches, sweets, and chocolate. They can see what we put in our system when it comes out.

More vegetables and fruits for me and less starches and white products.

Comments:

According to Ayurveda during colon cleansing with basis (the Ayurveda term for enemas), one will typically see excess doshas (i.e. vitiated wastes/ toxins) in 3 stages. Firstly, the elimination of excess wind energy (Vata) in the form of gas. The other 2 stages are release of heaty bilious liquid (liver mediated toxins, called Pitta in Ayurveda), and finally phlegm buildup in the form of mucus release (called Kapha dosha in Ayurveda).

The reviewer was aware of the gas (it tends to be obvious!) but not so much the other stages. They do not always occur in a single session anyways, although they should occur over a course of treatments.

What goes in must come out, once assimilated. Poor food choices inevitably leaves a toxic residue, so yes, it can be discerned in the outflowing tube.

12.'.... My doctor said that most people who have the results of the transit test that I had would need a colostomy. I am hopeful that my success will continue. At least I know that I can go for more colonic treatments if I feel the need. I wouldn't feel wonderful immediately after each treatment, but the next day I would feel wonderful. The bloating would be gone, and also the rumbling that I usually had...'

Comments:

Here's someone using colonics in the hope of staving off the worst-case medical prognosis they have been given. And why ever not?

There is a sense of hope and reawakened confidence in the strength and resilience of ones body that comes from having regular colonics...

13. '.... The first session was awkward but productive. I left feeling light and fluffy. The second session, four days later, wasn't as productive. But today I feel that I am well on my way to a life free of IBS symptoms (bloating, abdominal pain, and constipation). I have not had any symptoms since beginning this treatment.

A couple things I've changed upon the recommendations of my therapist: diet (no more artificial sweeteners, less white sugar and flour, more fruits and veggies), times of meals, supplements (no more Fibercon, now I take Probio 8), more R and R.....'

Comments:

This reviewer is making the distinction between what seems to be a productive session (based on amount of release), and the longer-term benefits, which are based on multi factorial changes in lifestyle. A good colon therapist is also a health coach.

14. '...I was talked into seeing a naturopath and today had my first colonic. I was so scared and worried that it might do more harm than good. I am feeling fantastic and free right now. I even feel fresh and cleansed.

It was really uncomfortable for me at the time and I didn't know whether I would make it through the 45 minutes! I was even thinking that I was never going to try this again. But afterwards I felt a huge difference. I am not puffy or bloated or crampy in any way. I even feel energized. I am scheduled for another next week.

This was my last resort, as I have tried everything and let me tell you that this is the first thing that hasn't made me feel worse. It has made me feel on top of the world, like my body has been needing this for a long time now. The discomfort won't be as bad next time I am sure, as I will know how great it makes me feel afterwards. I give this five stars as it is the best therapy that I have come across so far.....'

Comments:

This reviewer is making the tradeoff between short-term discomfort, and longer-term payoff.

15. '.... So, I gave a colonic a shot. I scheduled two appointments, one following the other the next day. The first time I did not release much. Brown liquid and some white mucous. The second day during the warm water fill, which felt wonderful, I started having intense gas pains. The therapist massaged my intestinal area below my stomach to no avail. So she said I would probably have my release on the toilet.

...I went to the bathroom. There I had a huge release! Black water and solid black chunks! I felt much better immediately!

I will be going regularly (one or two times a month) and have started drinking green smoothies, vegetables and fruits blended to smoothie consistency which the therapist recommended, as well as eating little to no dairy and refined sugars. The smoothies taste great, give me energy and above all help keep me regular. No more gas pains, less flatulence, my stomach finally doesn't hang out over my belt...'

Comments:

This reviewer is noticing the stages of release mentioned in my comments above (nr

11).

Note the dietary and lifestyle changes being implemented.

16. '...I had lost my ability to know how my body was functioning during the stages of elimination.

My therapist was so wonderful and it is really important to go to someone you can trust. A friend recommended this therapist to me. She immediately recommended I start with magnesium to begin to loosen my bowel movement, because hard and unpredictable stools were causing my body to stop elimination or block it. The magnesium worked immediately and my bloating and general belly discomfort disappeared after a few days.'

Comments:

Losing touch with ones body is a typical but not often mentioned factor in IBS; restoring that connection is one of the more subtle, yet powerful aspects of colon hydro therapy.

Magnesium judiciously used for hard stools is one of my preferred approaches. Taken orally and rectally, they are a great complement to a colonic treatment.

17. '...I went every single week for one year.It's made a huge difference. I finally had a breakthrough colonic which was exciting after about six months. I am mainly IBS-C and I needed that clean-out every week as I would feel sick. I'm glad I persevered...Before; I could only move my bowels with laxatives.

I am now only going every three weeks (18 months later) and I look forward to my colonics. I have a regular bowel motion every day (sometimes more often) with the occasional attack of diarrhea (if I eat something wrong) but I think they are truly wonderful...'

Comments:

One can expect a breakthrough from time to time, if one perseveres. Note the difference between laxatives and colonics: the former was habit forming; use of latter has a reducing trend (i.e. from once a week at peak usage to once every 3 weeks). This reviewer is having regular, daily-unassisted bowel movements, indicative of restored bowel functionality.

18. '...I recently had a colonic done after about three weeks of IBS symptoms. I didn't notice much difference that day, but the IBS symptoms were completely gone by the next day. It has been about one month since my treatment, and actually things were great up until about four or five days ago, when my symptoms reoccurred...

I am going to schedule another colonic, and maybe try to have it done once per month for a while, see how that goes! I do recommend it...it is a bit uncomfortable, especially if you are having symptoms at the time, but not painful, and well worth the results!'

Comments:

Symptomatic relief pretty immediately (the next day), and continuing systemic relief for a month ... then recurrence. So, do colonics work?

Yes, but not if one has unrealistic expectations. It's not a one shot wonder. This reviewer is having a sensibly scheduled series, given that they enjoyed symptomatic relief for a month.

Context for my comments:

I do not offer my comments as medical advice or diagnosis or prescription. I am not medically qualified. It is offered from the perspective of a holistic practitioner.

Please note also that my comments are simply opinions and perspectives, and no assertion is made that they represent the views of the person making the post.

Indeed there has been no dialogue with those individuals.

Note also that small (sometimes very slightly edited) extracts have formed the context for my selective comments, so readers interested in the unedited reviews should go to the original review posts . <http://www.ibstales.com/colonics.htm>