

## Q&A with Julia - IBS and colonics

**Q:** Can anyone please share their experiences with colonics and IBS?

I have heard that Colonics can help with IBS?

If so, is anyone able to give me a considered view on 'why'?

Please, I would appreciate the perspectives of both others living with IBS and Practitioner experiences/ knowledge. I am trying to build up my own understanding so that I can be more informed user of all the therapies that say they can help!

*The question above was posted on the Wahanda community page.*

Julias' answer follows:

**A:** Yes, colonics can definitely be beneficial for folk living with IBS.

Let me put that statement into context.

A number of alternative approaches can play a part in treating (the symptoms of) IBS since many are holistic approaches, ie client and wellness-centred (as opposed to disease and medicine-focused). It may be that sustainable results can only be gotten with a multi-pronged approach combining dietary changes (i.e. elimination diets, regular food intake, specialised fibre, portion control, and the like) herbal/nutritional supplements and stress management approaches (hypnotherapy, colonics, NLP, mind detox, mindfulness, yoga etc.)

But your question is about Colonic Hydrotherapy. Why does it help, and what's different about it? In my view (and experience) Colonic Hydrotherapy can play a pivotal part in the management of IBS because it provides immediate symptomatic relief. It works symptomatically to relieve common symptoms such as bloating, distended abdomen, and alternating constipation and diarrhea. In fact, people with IBS often get immediate relief feeling like their colon finally is functional again (at least for some time after a colonic).

It is also a systemic intervention helping to retrain bowel peristalsis (natural movements of the intestines) and eliminate residual irritants that are sitting in the colon (including undigested foods and nasty bacteria/parasites). At West London Colonics treatments are done in conjunction with abdominal massage, probiotics, herbal & flaxseed implants, rescue remedies, judicious magnesium cleanse (where indicated) so as to keep the gut muscles relaxed (preventing spasms/pain).

An aphorism from yoga / Ayurveda says that a simple indicator of wellbeing is when the head is cool, the abdomen soft and the feet warm. Colonics do a good job in getting the abdomen appropriately and healthily soft!

If you are living with IBS and are looking for answers, you need '*good people and true*' on your health team. In my view, a colon hydrotherapist, (interested in IBS, whose advice you trust will be a key member of that team). It's a great first step. Cleansing the colon, and removing any old waste can itself do a great deal for a miserable colon, but it may not be enough. Then systematic detective work is to be

done to uncover the 'partners in crime'. (Yes, I admit it I have been watching 'Sherlock'...) Further investigation & testing (such as Food Intolerance Testing or Comprehensive Stool testing) may also be called for to rule out the villains. All the while, Colonic Hydrotherapy can be utilised to improve the bowel terrain.

Here goes with answering your supplementary question.

With colonics as a tool, client & therapist become detective & sidekick, Sherlock & Watson (or Cagney & Lacey) on the hunt for clues.

Both the IBS client & the colon hydro therapist are looking to uncover the underlying cause of bowel irritation. Conventional medics often use IBS as catch all diagnosis for digestive/ assimilation/ elimination problems without an organic cause (ie nothing tangible or physical is found to be wrong).

Stress is often given as a causative factor.

However, my experience is that its not stress factors, *per se*, that's the problem. Rather it's 'how' the stress is being processed by the body/ mind system. Also, stress factors need to re-defined contextually as anything that weakens the system. Only then does it make sense to lay the blame on stress. Else the diagnosis is too simplistic. So the idea can be that what strengthens the system also de-stresses it. And there are a number of things someone with IBS can do- with diet, supplementation, colon and other organ cleanses, colonics, probiotics, abdominal massage, mindfulness training, yoga etc.- to help bring the colon back into balance.

The great thing with a colonic is that both the client & colon hydro therapist can see what going on with the bowel movements. Something that's usually (and literally) to our back (and therefore disregarded) is brought centre stage (and moreover we take front row seats to watch the show!). It is often illuminating.

Has what has been eaten been digested properly? Is there evidence of too much yeast in the colon? Is there a lot of mucus, (which may indicate a food intolerance), or something else, irritating the bowel?

Staying with the detective analogy –here are 'possibles in the gallery of villains'. People with IBS have one or more of the following things to contend with at any one-time ...

- *"Things have gone sour"*: Improper digestion + long transit time = fermentation of the food in the gut; result is gas and bloating
- *"I can't stand you "*: Undiagnosed food intolerances that are literally irritating the gut ; result is constipation/ diarrhea (and / or alternating episodes of both), cramping and bloating.
- *"Intestinal sluggishness & intestinal hurry "*: Probably too much yeast in the colon – again causing constipation (intestinal inertia), diarrhea, (intestinal hurry, hurry) bloating ('does my tum look big in this?') and often a host of other unexplained maladies
- *"Enemy at the gut "*: Parasites or "bad bugs" in the colon – which again can cause a lot of discomfort in the colon.
- *"Where are the good guys gone?"* Lack of beneficial bacteria "good bugs" in the colon can cause constipation, and also bloating and discomfort.

- *“Is this like sticking plaster, or what?!”* Impacted faeces in the colon which may be stuck on the colon wall or in various pockets, stewing festering & fermenting, causing many IBS symptoms.
- *“Fibre free zone ain’t such a good thing”*: Result? The unpleasantly evocative “putrefactive fermentation” –often seen in people who have been on fad diets for extended periods. In the absence of fibre-rich carbohydrates to keep the pH balance right, putrefactive fermentation can set in, with resultant bloating and gas.

There’s a great line in one of the ‘The Godfather’ trilogy of films: *keep your friends close, but your enemies closer.*

When the villains are known, their habits and peccadilloes known, then a plan of action to deal with them becomes *‘doable’*.