

Colon Hydrotherapy

What is colon hydrotherapy?

Colon hydrotherapy, also known as colon cleansing or colonic irrigation, is often practised as a form of alternative medicine. The claimed purpose of the procedure is to remove toxin, lose weight, prevent diseases, relieve constipation, promote general health and well-being.

Description of the procedure

It is known that such procedure commonly involved the use of “Colonic Irrigation Systems” which are medical devices originally intended for bowel preparation before radiological or endoscopic procedures.

The client generally lies down and water is pumped through the rectum via a tube. Fluids and waste are expelled through another tube. A large volume of fluid, up to 60 litres would be introduced into the colon via the rectum. The procedure may be repeated several times.

Purported mechanism of action

It is claimed that with the introduction of filtered and temperature regulated water into the colon through the anus, the waste could be softened and loosened, resulting in evacuation through natural bowel movement. The purported health benefit is claimed to be achieved by removing waste and toxins from the body. However, there is a lack of evidence from the medical literature that colon cleansing can produce these effects.

Potential risks and complications

- Complications associated with the procedure may include abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting, diarrhoea and dehydration. It may also result in electrolyte disturbances causing symptoms like nausea, fatigue, etc. Severe complications include bowel perforation, renal failure, pelvic abscess and air embolism.
- The use of improperly sterilised equipment may lead to transmission of infection. Outbreak of amoebiasis with fatalities associated with colon hydrotherapy has been reported.

Advice to the public

1. There is no evidence that the procedure could remove waste and toxins from the body as claimed. You should consult a registered doctor if you have any

health concern.

2. The purported health-promoting effect of colon hydrotherapy is questionable. The procedure may cause complications which can be fatal. Consumers should think twice before undergoing the procedure. If you suffer from constipation, medical attention should be sought to identify the cause of the problem.
3. Understand the potential risks and complications of colon hydrotherapy before you decide to undergo the procedure.
4. Request for related information from the service provider, including his/her name, qualifications, experience in performing the procedure, details of the procedure and any arrangements for dealing with emergencies and complications (e.g. intense discomfort) during the procedure.
5. You should pay attention to the sanitary condition of the environment, including the tools used, whether the instruments have been properly disinfected, and whether the plastic tubes used are disposable.
6. Persons with a history of gastrointestinal diseases (such as diverticulitis, Crohn's disease, or ulcerative colitis) or a history of colon surgery, severe haemorrhoids, kidney disease or heart disease (fluid overload may affect the kidneys and heart) may have an increased risk of complications. They are not suitable for the procedure.
7. If you feel unwell after the procedure, seek medical attention immediately.