

The radiant way

Glowing and lissome after a week's detox in sunny Majorca, Sarah Roberts is won over by the virtues of colonic treatments

Are you completely mad? Several of my friends said, before I embarked on an 'Dynamic Detox' programme in Majorca. 'People go to Majorca to have fun, eat paella and drink Rioja, not to sip vegetable juices and have stuff syphoned out of their bottoms for nine days straight. Anyway, daily colonic irrigation is bad for you.'

Feeling crushed and apprehensive, my friend Charlotte and I flew to Majorca. It didn't help that we arrived on the first day that it had snowed in the Balearics since 1956. 'Don't worry,' said Raul Cohen, founder of Dynamic Detox. 'It will have cleared up by the end of the week.'

We soon discovered Raul to be blessed with a permanently sunny personality. He also has excellent medical credentials. Colonics are not everyone's cup of tea but, as we drove to our hotel, he enthused about the treatments and explained what was to come. Like the weather, he told us, we would be changed unrecognisably in a week's time: our complexions would be clearer, our bodies trimmer, and our mental attitudes brimming with positivity. 'Of course, you may have been told that daily colonic irrigation is bad for you; that you shouldn't do it more than three times a year. But I promise you, you will not believe the results.'

Colonic hydrotherapy (or irrigation) is a highly effective method of cleansing the system. Many health problems are believed to stem from a build-up of waste products in the body, exacerbated by pollution and unwholesome foods. Few people's diets allow the bowel to empty perfectly every day, so most of us are left with waste that gradually coats the bowel lining, reducing its ability to absorb nutrients. In a colonic-irrigation treatment, warm filtered water is introduced into the rectum and flushed through the colon, washing out old toxic matter that has built up over the years.

The residential Dynamic Detox programme in Majorca was born out of Raul's original practice in north London. Raul once ran popular detox breaks in Scotland,

but the climate was not conducive to complete relaxation. A believer in the benefits of sunshine, he searched Majorca for the perfect hotel to host his residential detox weeks. The Jardin Del Sol Suites & Spa, as we were to discover, has just the right blend of helpful staff, comfort, and stunning location – each spacious room has a balcony right on the Mediterranean.

That evening, we met in the communal room, where we were to drink our organic fruit and vegetable juices, freshly squeezed each day. Raul explained the schedule, and handed us each our own personal reference book, a bewildering array of vitamin supplements, a natural-bristle brush for skin-brushing, plastic jugs for mixing our drinks, several powders in glass containers, and a stool. A stool? This turned out to be the best method of having a bowel movement. You put your feet on it while sitting on the loo, raise your knees, and rub your tummy in a circular motion. Taking these to our rooms turned out to be our first ice-breaker; we giggled furtively, wondering what the hotel guests in the bar must think of four track-suited women slinking by with plastic stools.

On the first day, we were up at 7am for five minutes of thorough skin-brushing, and took hot-then-cold showers. We then swallowed our supplements, and went down to the common room for fruit juice. After some gentle stretching exercises, we had the first of our four daily cleansing drinks. This miraculous powder, formulated by Raul, apparently helps 'suck' all toxins out of the body. I was already feeling the effects of a few hours fasting – weak, achy and with a slightly fizzy feeling in my head – when I went for my first colonic appointment. Raul took my blood pressure and weighed me. I had already visited my doctor in London to check my fitness for the treatment – a stipulation for doing the course.

Raul put me completely at ease. I lay on the bed underneath a large wallchart of the human colon, and he explained that, after breast cancer, cancer of the bowel is the second biggest cause of death. Surely, it makes sense to clean the bowel area

every so often, just as you would floss your teeth? Raul directed me to lie on my side with my knees up, so that he could insert the tube. Oddly enough, this is always the real indignity for me, but after that, I find the whole process strangely soothing.

On the third day, an interesting thing happened. I had been warned that the detox might make me feel cold (it did), or depressed, or even sick – but I was not prepared for anger. I cancelled my therapeutic thalasso bath and massage (four spa treatments are included in the price of the course), and stomped down to the local square, where I ordered an illicit coffee and bought all the English Sunday papers. This was strictly against the rules; Raul had asked us not to watch TV or read newspapers because he considers them to be 'toxic substances'. But I sat in the sun feeling grumpy, until my schoolgirl defiance evaporated. Surprisingly, I missed my fellow inmates and felt I was letting the side down. I realised I'd rather be with the team.

Hooray! By day four I could see results. The tops of my thighs had stopped rubbing together (I lost five pounds in the first four days), Charlotte's bottom started to look distinctly pert, Lorna's face was glowing, and Christine could touch her toes in the yoga class. 'It's all habit,' Raul said. 'People don't realise that if they just change their habits, they can do anything.'

I had never expected this course to be such fun, or so informative. I felt more toned, and could feel my waistline distinctly; even a couple of long-hidden ribs were resurfacing. Before departure, Raul gave each of us a personal summary. 'You must chew your food more, and try not to eat on the run,' he said. This course isn't just about colonics, but about diet, exercise and rest: treating the whole of you. Five days into it, I wanted out. At the end, I could have done another week. I felt so well, so light, so clear-headed – and nine pounds lighter. □ *The nine-day course costs from about £1,540 (based on two people sharing). For further details about Dynamic Detox, ring +34 971 701 708, or visit www.cleanbreaks.net.*