

The bottom line

Less painful than a Brazilian and just as vital as a facial, beauty editor Sophie Forte argues that colonics are essential for great skin, and wellbeing from the inside out

Illustration Delicatessen



Colonic irrigation. Admittedly, it doesn't have the same desirable ring to it as, say, Frangipani Milk Float Massage, sounding more like something out of a DIY plumbing guide than anything related to beautification. It's no wonder, then, that the consensus on colonics tends to be a resolute 'No thanks.'

Despite the fact that colonics are mainstream enough to feature regularly on television before the 9pm watershed (see Gillian McKeith's intestinal interrogations on *You Are What You Eat*), my monthly 'hoe downs' are treated rather sceptically by my friends.

I'm not saying that there aren't more luxurious ways to spend £75 in an hour. But while one colonic alone gives you a bright-eyed-bushy-tailed glow, regular visits are a more sure-fire route to getting a fabulous complexion than any fancy facial. And in terms of what they do for your energy levels and digestion, I'm amazed that every woman isn't having them.

So, how did I get to being this colonic-crazed, irrigation addict? Blame it on Elle Macpherson. Life

BC (before colonics) was a constant battle against bloating and unaccounted bouts of tiredness. Going near any food labelled with 'chocolate' or 'biscuit' made me look about four months pregnant and feel as if I'd been run over by a Wagon Wheel (rather than just eaten one). So when rumour had it that this was the secret of every flat-bellied sylph, like Elle, I was up on colonic-guru Amanda Griggs' treatment bed at Balance (the London beauty and health mecca) faster than you can say 'The Body'.

Sashaying out of Balance after my first treatment, I was unsure of

what to say to my friends when they grilled me on what had 'gone on' (or come out, as it were). They wanted X-rated anecdotes of suction pumps, jet hoses, stomach cramps and the miraculous appearance of the piece of Lego I swallowed as a toddler, but the reality was tame.

For a start, the embarrassment and pain ratings are both negligible. Sure, it's more

uncomfortable than, say, a pedicure but far less so than a Brazilian. And there's none of the imagined real-life, out-in-the-open poo involved. A tube is (painlessly) put into your bottom, connected

to a hose that lets water in from a super-purified water tank and out down a sealed drain. As I lie there, Amanda massages my tummy and feet as she gradually lets water into my intestines.

There's zero pain and just the odd gurgle as it flows in and out (no suction involved), carrying with it, well, lots and lots of poo. The whole process is strangely relaxing.

Apparently, most clients don't want to look at the tube, but I'm utterly fascinated. Think you're a 'regular' type of gal? Watch this amount of waste matter flow out and you'll change your tune. Who

knew that a well-MOT'd bowel should 'evacuate' at least a couple of times a day? Ready-meals, refined foods, microwaves and deep-fat fryers weren't around when our bodies were designed, so it's little wonder that we haven't got caveman-regular digestion. Colonics are the Corgi of personal plumbing, clearing out all the lingering food in your pipework, and will encourage regular, normal bowel movements. Amanda has even managed to potty-train clients that were only 'going' once a week.

Considering how amazing colonics make me feel (I repeat, no more bloating!), I honestly consider a monthly colonic no more unusual than a regular facial. Call this mad, label it indulgent, but don't be scared to try one yourself – it's only when your colonic hydrotherapist replaces your hairdresser on your Christmas card list that you'll know you, too, are truly obsessed. ■

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