

La Casa Day Spa

Tissue and Organ Cleansing

The most dramatic illustration we've had at *La Casa* of the importance of detoxification is the story of Selena. I hadn't been to our spa in Puerto Rico for about a month. When I saw my friend Selena, I was shocked that in just that one month she had lost 20 pounds. She lamented that every time she put any food in her body, she had excruciating abdominal pains and nausea. She hadn't been able to eat any solid food for that entire month. Selena was scheduled for exploratory abdominal surgery the next day.

La Casa's Naturopathic Doctor gave Selena an immediate colonic, green water and soothing teas. That afternoon they did another colonic. For three days, Selena had two colonics each day. By the second day she was able to eat watermelon without pain and by the third day she was cheerfully chomping down a baked potato. Selena never had her surgery.

Digestion

Food, like germs, is recognized by the body as a foreign presence. The process of breaking down this foreign entity is the process of digestion. This is normally completed without ill consequences when the individual is able to break down the chemical components of the food.

Digestion occurs in a part of the body that is not, topologically, inside the body. The body can be seen as a thick, misshapen cylinder, the outer surface being what we see, the inner surface being the alimentary canal. This digestive system consists of a single convoluted tube, some thirty feet long, open at its beginning -- the mouth, and its end -- the anus. Various sites in the tube, such as the stomach, are enlarged enough to accommodate the task of holding food and mixing it with glandular secretions. Some components of food, such as the cellulose in bread and vegetables, enter and leave the digestive tract never having entered the body itself. It is only when food components are broken down into small particles, simple enough to be absorbed, that the surface of the cylinder is finally breached, and nutrients enter the blood and lymphatic systems which, in turn, will carry them to every cell in the body. Toxins, as well as nutrients, enter the body systemically through digestion, and then through the fluid mediums, the blood and lymphatic.

Digestion begins in the mouth with the release of the first digestive enzyme, ptyalin, which changes (digests) starches to sugars. When the food has been chewed, muscles in the cheeks, tongue and roof of the mouth all cooperate together to form a kind of chute so that food can be pushed down into the pharynx, then, through involuntary movements, into the esophagus. From here the food passes into the stomach where the effect of hydrochloric acid will break down the food particles into still smaller units. Large quantities of digestive enzymes are secreted so that the food gets converted into a semi-fluid state called chyme. This chyme now passes into the beginning of the bowel, the duodenum, the first portion of the small intestine, where the enzymes combine to further digest the food substances. It is here in the small intestine that 90% of the absorption of all food constituents into the bloodstream takes place.

By the time the chyme has reached the end of the small intestine, all that remains of what started out as food in the mouth is water and waste. This solid waste passes to the large intestine, the colon, for the final stage of digestion and elimination. The large intestine swarms with billions of friendly bacteria whose function is to accomplish the final synthesizing of nutrients. Rhythmic motions of the muscles of the five foot long organ, called peristalsis, push the solid waste toward the rectum and anus where it is eliminated from the body. The walls of the colon absorb most of the water which will be evacuated as urine.

As we improve our diets, waste elimination becomes more important than ever. Nutritional factors become available to cells which they may not have had for years. As a result

of this more concentrated nourishment, cellular metabolism will speed up and more metabolic waste will be dumped into the bloodstream. Usually the organs of elimination are not used to handling this larger amount of waste, and they will prove to be not up to the task. Uneliminated waste will then collect in the bloodstream, and we will experience the same kind of auto-intoxication that Carrel's chicken heart cells suffered from (though usually not with lethal results, or at least not without 20 to 30 years of waste accumulation). Ultimately, we will even defeat the purpose of the original dietary improvement because the cells will no longer be able to utilize the fresh nutrients being provided by the nutritional program.

Digestion and elimination of undigested food is only one of the means that the body has of ridding itself of waste. There are five eliminative channels of the body: skin, liver, lungs, kidneys and, of course, the bowel. Each of these organs will carry away waste adequately so long as the demands on the organ do not exceed its capability. Together all five comprise a multilayered structure, consisting of a series of back-up systems. Exquisite checks and balances insure that should one eliminative channel fail, another is waiting to step in. Material that should normally be discharged through one organ will find its way to another eliminative organ. For instance, toxins that have not been eliminated through the colon may find themselves attempting to be released through the skin, causing rashes or other skin disorders. The body will attempt, always to find its way back to homeostatic balance.

When the body has exhausted even its emergency back-up systems of elimination through its ordinary eliminative organs, it seeks even more drastic solutions. For instance, in cancer, toxins have been unable to find proper elimination, and they settle in the connective tissue of the body. Every cancerous tumor is surrounded by this connective tissue; wherever cancer has established itself in the body, connective tissue is found. When even this method of storing toxins fails, when the connective tissue can no longer receive any more material, then toxins will pass into the bloodstream and other tissues, thus creating systemic auto-intoxication.

Heart disease, like cancer, begins as a healing response to an abnormal condition. The arterial system of the body is like an extraordinarily complex map. Tunnel-like vessels carry blood to every part of the body. In order to accommodate to the body, the vessels turn and twist incessantly, and in doing so, tiny wounds or tears are created. These internal wounds are quickly healed normally through the growth of new cells. In effect, internal scabs are formed. Cholesterol and fats form around the scab as it heals. This is a completely natural process, and one that is handled easily when blood flow is strong and when the amount of scarring is not too great. However, when there is more scarring than the body can handle, or when more cholesterol deposits around the scab than the body can tolerate, then the natural healing cannot continue. Further growth is promoted; the cholesterol actually begins to act as a carcinogen within the artery by promoting wild, new growth. The arterial wall becomes so coated with abnormal growth, called plaque, that blood flow is diminished. The coronary arteries are no longer able to transport an adequate amount of blood to the heart.

It is clear that to stay healthy, we need to keep all of the eliminative channels of the body in good working order. Given how little attention we pay to our own bodily waste removal, it is actually rather amazing that we live as long as we do. But think about how long we could live if our bodies, on the inside as well as the outside, were clean.

In fact, we are unique in our neglect of this facet of our health. Most cultures and traditions of medicines have practices designed specifically to eliminate bodily toxins. Among the most advanced are the techniques of the yogis. Sivananda yoga teaches various *kriyas* -- purification practices which cleanse parts of the body that have a tendency to collect unwanted debris.

La Casa has taken as its point of departure these various yogic traditions of cleansing. Some, we have taken precisely as they have been practiced for thousands of years. For others, we have up-dated techniques for modern convenience. Now all of us can gain control over functions of our bodies without the steely discipline of a seasoned yogi.

Cleaning the colon

It is unfortunate that American doctors have contended for decades that the number of bowel movements an individual has is unrelated to health. They have convinced most of us that they are correct. Most people think that they are not constipated if they are having one bowel movement a day. Yet, we eat three meals a day. Where are the other two meals going if they're not being eliminated through the colon? The answer actually is somewhat frightening. The rest of the food that is not absorbed by the body as nutrients stays around the body in unlikely places -- against the colon walls, in tissues and organs, in arteries -- any place at all in the body can serve as a receptacle for uneliminated waste.

Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, of the famed Battle Creek Sanitarium, maintained that 90% of modern diseases are the result of improper functioning of the colon. British physician, Sir Arbuthnot Lane concurred after performing hundreds of bowel resections where diseased portions of the bowel were removed. He noticed that during the time that the patient was recovering from the surgery that other diseases, seemingly unrelated to the colon problem, were cured.

Sir Lane came to understand that a large part of the problem in many diseases was the body's inability to adequately carry out its normal waste disposal functions. He calculated that a healthy intestine requires emptying every six hours, and that more commonly, it is emptied every 24 hours.

There is scientific research, as well, showing the relationship between bowel functioning and health. British and South African scientists have shown a lot of interest in this issue and have conducted elaborate experiments involving the clocking and weighing of feces of human volunteers. It has been confirmed that too few bowel movements and too little bulk in the stool is related to a variety of disorders, including heart and gallbladder diseases, diverticulitis, varicose veins, hiatal hernia and cancer of the large intestine.

There is also a study of over 1000 women with histories of constipation. Fluid was extracted from the breasts of the women. This fluid showed abnormal cells which are the same abnormal cells found in women with breast cancer. These cellular abnormalities occurred five times as often in women who moved their bowels fewer than three times a week than in women who did so more than once a day.

Our observations at La Casa show that, in fact, Sir Arbuthnot Lane was overly optimistic about the bowel functioning of most of us. What we at La Casa notice is that most people don't know that their bowels are not functioning properly. Humans are the only animals who have such insufficient bowel functioning. Breast-fed babies, indigenous peoples, birds and animals all evacuate their bowels shortly after each meal.

Normal bowel functioning means there is waste for everything that goes in except distilled water. We need to find those other, lost meals.

The Prescription:

Basti is the yogic tradition of natural cleansing of the lower intestines. It involves the controlled use of muscles to pull water up into the colon, and then, after churning the water around to dislodge old waste products, the water, and whatever it carries off with it, is expelled.

Since La Casa opened its doors, we have seen only one person who had learned internal cleansing through *basti*. Not surprisingly, like the yogis who preceded him, he had spent many years perfecting this technique. We have to admit, this method of colon cleansing will appeal to an extremely small number of people.

Fortunately, in the last few decades, there have been a number of natural health physicians interested in waste elimination. As a result, there are several methods of colon cleansing that are easier and just as thorough as *basti*.

Colon cleansing can be approached from, so to speak, either the top end or the bottom end -- the mouth or the rectum.

The simplest way of beginning colon cleansing is to add bulk to the diet. Fiber is present in all fresh, raw vegetables. Cooking softens the fiber and renders it ineffective. Dietary fiber in food is indigestible. But when present in the intestinal tract, it supports a multiplying population of intestinal bacteria, and this can be an aid in both digestion and elimination. The detoxifying powers of fiber were demonstrated in a study where rats were fed poison, and simultaneously put on a high fiber diet. These rats survived without harm, while other animals fed the same poison, but without the fiber, became ill and died.

Many alternative health practitioners have begun to recommend adding whole psyllium husks to the diet. Even traditional physicians generally recommend Metamucil, which is psyllium with added sugar. At La Casa, we are weary about creating too powerful of a detox in this way. There are several problems with psyllium. First, these husks can be irritating to the intestines. Additionally, psyllium acts like a magnet as it winds its way down the intestinal tract, pulling particles toward it. The problem here is that nutrient material as well as toxic material is pulled out. Finally, there is a delicate layer of mucus membranes and villi in the small intestine. These villi are important in the absorption of nutrients. The psyllium husks can scrape against these finger-like villi and damage them, thus interfering with the absorption of nutrients.

Bran is also frequently recommended as a way of increasing fiber in one's diet. Bran is even more irritating to the intestines than psyllium. Bran is a part of the wheat grain; it is a partial food rather than a whole food and thus can create a nutritional imbalance. Further, bran acts as an irritant to the lining of the digestive tract. The intestine, in order to rid itself of this irritant, attempts to rush the process of moving waste material through. Decreased nutrient absorption results because of the rapid transit through the tract. Further, constant use of bran can cause a chronic condition of intestinal lining irritation.

Cleaning out the colon through the use of water injected directly into the colon most closely replicates the *basti* method. The water shooting through the alimentary canal acts as a gentle stimulus to dislodge old, encrusted fecal material. Methods include colonics, enemas and colemas.

La Casa has colon therapists who specialize in helping people to know how to take care of their bowels. They also perform colonics, which is an intensive cleansing of the entire colon tract. Many people have an aversion to seeing or working with their fecal material other than at the bottom of a toilet. Colonics are sterile, painless and create an extremely thorough cleansing. This has recently become a popular method of colon cleansing. Most cities have facilities which perform colonics, as we do at La Casa Day Spa. We encourage our guests to continue their colonics at a local facility near their homes.

Enemas are effective in reaching the low part of the colon, but have the disadvantage of not reaching the entire organ. Adding ingredients to the water in an enema can, however, greatly enhance its detoxifying power. Coffee enemas stimulate the liver; flaxseed tea enemas relieve the colon of inflammation; bentonite, or clay water, greatly increases the absorption of toxins from the colon walls.

The colema board was developed more than thirty years ago by V.E. Irons. It is a home unit that combines the ease of the enema with the thoroughness of the colonic. It most closely approximates *basti* in that it is gentle, following the body's own natural rhythm for retention and expulsion of water. The water enters the intestinal tract, and it is the colon's own spontaneous contractions that pushes water out. Thus, the colema works like an exercise program. The water trains the colon to begin to correct its atrophied condition. Because the muscles in the colon are stimulated, the colon sends messages to the rest of the body to release stored toxins and to bring them down through the normal eliminative channels. Pockets of putrefied material embedded within the colon walls can be dislodged through the colema. We encourage the use of the colema board because the advantage of being able to do it yourself at home makes it economical and

convenient, as well as effective. We consider the colema to be an essential part of any health program.

Cleaning the colon:

- 1) Eat flaxseed cereal: grind up 2 tablespoonfuls of flaxseed. Add to goat yogurt with sunflower seeds and amazake.
- 2) Eat prunes stewed in hot water
- 3) Do an enema, colema or colonic. Remember each has a specific effect. Choose the one that best suits your needs at that time.
- 4) Drink an aloe smoothie: blend one inch portion of fresh aloe leaf (with green skin on) with juice of a whole lemon, honey to taste (you'll need lots to combat the bitter taste of the aloe skin, but the skin is the part of the leaf that has the purgative effect).
- 5) Herbal laxatives may be taken. Whole leaf aloe capsules are a good choice. There are many special formulations on the market. Laxatives with either senna or cascara sagrada will generally cause peristaltic cramping as they are both herbs that irritate the intestines. These herbs should be reserved for occasional use.

Remember that colon cleansing is a process that occurs only over time. It's taken you a lifetime of bad eating habits to clog up your colon and it often takes many years of good colon cleansing habits to unclog your colon. Be patient with your body.