

# ***Colonic Irrigation***

**An information sheet from the Kentucky Council Against Health Fraud  
www.kcahf.org**

## **Overview**

A procedure in which large amounts of water (as much as 20 gallons) are used to wash out the large intestine, supposedly removing “toxins” which contribute to health problems. Sometimes coffee, herbs, or other ingredients are included.

## **Scientific assessment**

Colonic irrigation is based on an outmoded idea in medicine, “autointoxication,” which held that accumulation of fecal material in the colon led to production of “toxins” which could poison the body. *We now know that this idea is false.* Intestinal surgery reveals no such buildups. The cells lining the intestine are constantly being shed and replaced by new cells, so the surface is being replaced all the time and nothing “builds up” on it. Finally, no one has identified specifically what “toxins” are supposed to be involved.

*Colonic irrigation is potentially dangerous!* There are many possible complications, including electrolyte imbalance, bowel perforation, infections, dehydration, and kidney failure. In some cases deaths have resulted from colonic irrigation.

For further information, see:

<http://www.quackwatch.org/01QuackeryRelatedTopics/gastro.html>

## **Recommendations**

Colonic irrigation has no benefits and may be dangerous. We recommend against its use, and that you avoid practitioners who advocate it.

**Recommendations of KCAHF are based on our assessments of the scientific literature concerning unconventional approaches to health care. For specific recommendations concerning your medical condition, consult your physician.**

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