

# Should I Get a Colon Cleanse?



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You may have heard that getting colon cleanses will flush out all the toxins in your GI tract, help your skin glow from the inside out ([we debunked this](#)), and leave you feeling as light as a feather. To get past all the sh\*t and find out whether or not colon cleanses are necessary, POPSUGAR spoke to gastroenterologist [Gina Sam](#), MD, MPH, and former clinical instructor at NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital and Weill Cornell Medical Centre.

## How a Colonic Works

According to Dr. Sam, a colonic (often referred to as colon hydrotherapy or colon irrigation) is an alternative-medicine procedure where water is infused into the rectum with a tube to flush or clean out the colon. During a colonic, a disposable plastic hose is connected to a the hydrotherapy unit and inserted into the rectum using a speculum. Once the hose is in place, the hydrotherapist slowly infuses warm, filtered water into the colon. The water causes peristalsis — the contraction of the colon muscles. Now that you know how the procedure works, here are the associated risks.

## The Risks Involved With Colonics

Unlike an enema, where a soft bottle is used to insert water or sodium chloride into the rectum initiating a bowel movement, colonic procedures can be rather risky. According to Dr. Sam, the potential risks of getting colonics include: perforation (causing a hole in the colon), infection, a shift in electrolytes (dehydration), and removing the good bacteria found in the colon. Before getting a colon-cleansing procedure, Dr. Sam advises asking questions about the facility, and overall, she does not recommend getting colonics.

## Why Colonics Won't Help You Detox

Colonics will remove stool, but if you're after a detox you should stick to the basics and start by eliminating artificial sugars and processed foods from your diet. "It is not necessary to detoxify with a colonic," Dr. Sam told POPSUGAR. "The colon has its natural way of cleansing itself and if you do have constipation, increase both your fibre and water intake," she explained. If that doesn't work, Dr. Sam advises seeing a gastroenterologist. In order to detoxify and have a healthy GI tract, Dr. Sam suggests the following:

- Eat four to five servings of fruits and vegetables daily
- Drink eight to 10 glasses of water a day
- Exercise for at least 30 to 45 minutes a day
- Cut down on red meat and fatty foods

Our best advice for detoxing: don't force it. If you think something is wrong with your digestion and would like to explore the best options to detoxify, consult your doctor.