

Who's afraid of a little ole colonic?

Summer has arrived earlier than usual this year and has jolted us all into panic about looking good in our Summer wear. Is there anything we can do to lose the shame (and a few pounds too), and make Spring/Summer a healthier experience? Caroline Kinane finds an unlikely solution.

There are certain points in your life where you choose a path that can later become decisions we describe as 'life-changing'. Giving up cigarettes for example, is a hugely empowering experience, travelling the world, meeting that someone special, and having your first child I'm sure must be one of the ultimate life-changing experiences. We usually associate these moments with such empowerment, independence and personal triumph, so it's strange that the choice to have a simple procedure called 'colonic irrigation' may one day be on my list.

When I was invited to roadtest a course of colonic treatments at Limerick's Ultimate Health Centre, I have to admit I was hesitant at first to accept. I knew little of what was actually involved but had an image in mind of what to expect, and frankly, it did make me just a little squeamish! After some consideration and research I decided to brave it - it couldn't do me any harm, and anything to kick-start a healthier year would be a welcome boost.

I called to the clinic just off the Ennis Road in Shannonville and met with the clinic's owner Caroline Danaher. Caroline has over thirteen years experience in the complementary health sector and in addition to being a registered colonic

hydrotherapist, she is a qualified allergist, parasitologist and nutritional therapist, so rest assured I was in safe hands.

Prior to first of the colonic treatments, Caroline and Marese at the clinic recommended I follow their one week detox diet in preparation. Seeing as I was in it this far, I decided I was going to get the most out of the experience so for the following week my daily diet consisted of the following: breakfast was a slice of melon or kiwi, porridge oat flakes made with water, McCambridge brown bread and a glass of water. The midday meal then was vegetable soup made with carrots, broccoli, parsnip and potatoes.

The evening meal was a choice of organic chicken or fresh white fish (cod, plaice, or whiting) either steamed or fried in olive oil, with potatoes or brown rice, and vegetables.

It was recommended I drink plenty of water between meals and that I consume no dairy products, no fruit or sugar, no salt or pepper, no tea or coffee, and no alcohol.

I was given a range of supplements to be taken every day of one tablespoon of golden linseeds twice daily, two teaspoons of refrigerated aloe vera juice twice daily, one bacteria capsule (acidophilus) in the morning, one 1000mg capsule of evening primrose in the morning and two colon control capsules twice daily. Now I'm not going to pretend following this diet was easy, I'm not usually one for diets and this was a whole new workload for me. I stuck to it as best I could though I will say I was very relieved when the week came to an end and it was

time for my first treatment.

The perception of a colonic irrigation treatment is varied but judging by the questions I have had since from friends, many see it as a possibly painful, intrusive and highly embarrassing situation. I can assure you, this is not the case. Yes it is a treatment that involves accessing a very private area of the body, but my therapist Caroline was a complete professional and couldn't have made me feel more at ease. The colonic treatment probably takes about 45 minutes in total and I was on quite a high afterwards that lasted all the following day as well.

I feel the experience is turning out to be quite an education into nutrition, all thanks to Caroline and her team. I'll certainly be a lot more guarded of the foods I eat now. It's made me think about everything I'm eating and while I was never too bad, I certainly wasn't good, and enjoyed lots of rich foods without consideration.

The recommended course is three treatments so as I write (sipping my organic caffeine-free coffee with soya milk!)

I am on a week of an alkaline-acid 80/20 diet before having my second colonic. I'll have a little update for you next week on how it goes but if you want to find out more information, men and women (40 per cent of the clinic's clients are male) can check out the Ultimate Health Clinic's website at www.irishultimatehealth.com or call the clinic at 061 322011. The course of three treatments costs €275, and one colonic treatment (recommended every six months) is €100.

Read the detox update in next week's issue.