

# Why the Newest (and Grossest) Beauty Trend Is Total Bullsh\*t

April 4, 2018 by [WENDY GOULD](#)



Image Source: [Unsplash / Caleb George](#)

Let's just go ahead and insert *all* the poop emojis right now, because we're totally going there. Yep, we're talking about colonics and — specifically — how they may or may not affect your overall skin health. And if you're thinking, "How in the world does that part of my body have anything to do with the rest of me?" then we're all on the same page heading into this.

Over recent years, we've seen an uptick in the number of people voluntarily getting a colonic as a way to "detox" the body. We'll go more into those claims shortly (and also discuss if they hold up), but first let's discuss what a colonic is.

## What Is a Colonic?



Image Source: [UnSplash / Graham Hunt](#)

"Colon cleansing is a process where the colon is 'cleansed' by inserting two tubes into the anus and up the colon. One flushes with water (and sometimes vitamins, herbs, tea, etc.) while the other tube suctions out the diluted feces," said [Dr. Anna Guanche](#), a dermatologist with the Bella Skin Institute.

The amount of fluids flushed through the system in a single colonic can reach as much as 16 gallons. Sometimes cleaning the colon is a necessary preemptive measure a doctor prescribes before a medical procedure, such as a colonoscopy, or in cases of severe constipation. However, in recent years, it's become somewhat trendy to voluntarily have one done.

## Colonic "Detox" Claims



Image Source: [UnSplash / Lauren Mancke](#)

Google "colonic" and you'll be met with a string of alternative medicine and wellness centers offering the procedure along with lots of claims regarding toxin removal.

"People believe that colonics remove toxins from the gastrointestinal tract and claim increased energy and boosts to the immune system," said [Dr. Suzanne Friedler](#), a dermatologist for Advanced Dermatology PC. "They also claim that colonics can help with arthritis, asthma, and allergies."

Dr. Guanche added, "The most common reason I hear is to decrease bloating and to lose weight just before the red carpet or other appearances. Some believe it is very good for you and removes 'toxins' that decomposing food has produced."

By extension, many people who get colonics insist that this flushing of toxins and "gut reset" improves the quality of their skin. The idea is that colon health and your skin are linked, and centers who provide colonic services tout a clearer, brighter complexion as yet another benefit for having one done.

## The Truth



Image Source: [Unsplash / Concha Rodrigo](#)

We're just going to get straight to it. All three of the medical experts we spoke to strongly advised against getting a colonic unless it was prescribed by your doctor and overseen by medical professionals.

"There is no science to prove that colonics improve your skin in any way," said Dr. Guanche. "It is a way to dehydrate the body, and often patients who proclaim that they 'feel great!' because of their colonics actually look like hell. They are sallow, dehydrated, and sickly looking. In fact, the body process for nutrient and hydration reabsorption is being interrupted, and the delicate ecosystem of bacteria that aid in digestion is being disturbed."

She said that bacteria accounts for a third of any person's stool, and this is as it should be. Ultimately, a disruption in nutrients, water content, and electrolytes causes more harm than good. In fact, it can make you very sick or, in worst cases, result in death.

"Colonics can be dangerous," Dr. Friedler warned. "Equipment must be sterile, or it could lead to serious infection. Coffee enemas sometimes used in colonics have resulted in several deaths. People undergoing colonics are at increased risk of dehydration, electrolyte imbalances, bowel perforations, cramping, bloating, and nausea."

## The Bottom Line



Image Source: [Unsplash / Bruce Mars](#)

Here's the bottom line (pun totally intended): there is zero evidence that colonics benefit the skin, and it's a complicated and potentially dangerous procedure.

"I must admit, when I heard about the trend to do colonics for better skin, I was a little surprised. Colonics can be a very expensive, time-consuming, messy, and uncomfortable — and even a painful process. I myself have had it done — and found it painful — without long-lasting skin benefits." said [Tamara Sofj](#), an MS nutritionist and consultant for science-backed skincare brand, Lycored. "There are less extreme ways to get, and keep, better, more glowing skin. Furthermore, colonics don't support other key aspects of skin care, which include skin matrix support, sun protection, and hyperpigmentation."

The best way to get glowing skin is through a healthy, well-balanced diet full of fruits and vegetables and by staying hydrated through the day, noted Dr. Friedler. Add to that a consistent skincare routine — loaded with gentle cleansers, rich serums, and moisturizing creams — and your skin will look way better than it ever will after getting a superuncomfortable colonic.