

Why in the world would someone use coffee in an enema?

That is the question I asked when my health practitioner suggested I do coffee enemas. Yet when I got over my initial resistance, I quickly noticed the many benefits of coffee enemas. I did them daily for over 15 years and I credit, to some degree, the recovery of my health and that of many others.

I have recommended coffee enemas to over ten thousand patients. Many have told me how wonderful they are. Several said coffee enemas saved their lives. Indeed, they are most helpful for many types of conditions. The procedure is also inexpensive and can be done at home without special equipment.

History of the Coffee Enema. Enemas are an ancient form of hydrotherapy. They have been used for thousands of years for mechanically cleansing the colon. This is proven in the Dead Sea Scrolls. To read about this interesting use of enemas, read [Coffee Enemas](#) on this site.

Enemas and colonic irrigation were used routinely in hospitals. Coffee enemas were mentioned in older editions of the *Merck Manual*, a handbook for medical physicians. They were later popularized by Max Gerson, MD, author of *A Cancer Therapy - Results of 50 Cases*.

Dr. Gerson pioneered nutritional therapy for cancer and other diseases with excellent results. His therapy combined coffee

enemas with a special diet, juices and other supplements. The enemas were an integral part of the therapy.

Benefits. The major benefit of the coffee enema, according to Dr. Gerson, is to enhance the elimination of toxins through the liver. Indeed, endoscopic studies confirm that the coffee enema increases bile output.

To test this idea, a patient was given a coffee enema while an endoscope (a thin tube with a camera on the end to view the intestine) monitored the entrance to the common bile duct. Within minutes of administering the enema, bile flow increased.

Increased bile flow also alkalinizes the small intestine and promotes improved digestion. Coffee also acts as an astringent in the large intestine, helping clean the colon walls.

A common contributor to ill health is the production and absorption of toxins within the small and large intestines. If food is not digested properly, sugars ferment and protein putrefies or rots. Both processes generate toxic chemicals, which are then absorbed into the liver.

The coffee enema enhances digestion by increasing bile flow and removes toxins in the large intestine so they will not be absorbed. Most people with health complaints suffer from impaired digestion and excessive production of toxic substances in the intestines.

Coffee enemas are particularly helpful for slow oxidizers. Their liver activity is more sluggish and digestion is usually impaired. Fast oxidizers may have more difficulty retaining the enema.

The procedure described below is really a coffee implant rather than an enema, because it involves only two to three cups of water.

Using more water than this may make the enema more difficult to retain for some individuals and is not really needed in most cases.

If you wish, however, the use of a quart of water, and making sure the water reaches most of the large intestine, is more helpful for cleansing the colon of accumulated waste material. If one suspects severe bowel toxicity or in cases of serious illness, quart enemas are preferable, at least to start with.

How Often And How Long? I usually suggest one enema per day to assist detoxification or to enhance liver activity. Two enemas daily may be taken during a healing reaction if needed. For those who are very ill, several a day may be best for at least several months. (Dr. Gerson, by the way, used six coffee enemas daily for cancer patients.)

For best results, a program of coffee enemas should be carried on for at least a month. They should not be needed for more than two to five years, although many people have continued to take them for a number of years without problems.

The best time to take the enema is after a normal bowel movement. One will get a slight rush from the caffeine, but it is not like drinking coffee, which I do not recommend. Coffee enemas taken in the evening may interfere with sleep.

If performed properly, coffee implants do not cause habituation, constipation or any rectal problems. In over 28 years of practice, I have rarely seen significant problems from coffee enemas if they are done properly, according to the instructions below.

The exception is if there are significant hemorrhoids, rectal fissures or other rectal problems. In these cases, extra care is needed

in inserting the enema tip.

Some people with hemorrhoids find enemas irritating and cannot do them. This is one of the few contraindications for coffee enemas. While enemas may seem uncomfortable, many clients report the procedure is so helpful they soon forget the inconvenience.

Step 1. Materials

* **Buy a 2-quart enema bag with a clamp.** An enema/douche bag combination is easier to use because you can close the top. If you cannot find one locally at a drugstore, here is a link to buy one inexpensively at Walgreens on line:

<http://www.walgreens.com/store/c/walgreens-combination-douche%2c-enema-and-water-bottle-system/ID=prod17207-product>

* **Buy any brand of preferably organically grown coffee.** It must be regular coffee - regular grind or flaked. Do not buy instant coffee and do not buy decaffeinated coffee. Organic coffee is available at natural food stores and at many supermarkets as well. Be sure to keep opened coffee containers in the freezer for maximum freshness.

Step 2. Preparation of coffee

There are three methods. The first two are a little better, but any of these will work.

1) The boil method.

* Place 2 to 3 cups of purified water and **one-half to two tablespoons** of coffee in a saucepan

and bring to a boil (or use a coffee maker to percolate the coffee quickly).

NOTE: The first time you do a coffee enema, use only **1 teaspoon**, NOT TABLESPOON, of coffee. This is critical because some people are sensitive to caffeine and will feel very jittery on more coffee. After a few enemas, you will see how much coffee you can tolerate comfortably. Ideally, increase to two tablespoons per enema.

* Let it boil 5 minutes, then turn off the heat and allow it to cool. One or two ice cubes may be added to speed the cooling process. You may make a larger quantity and use it for several enemas.

Tricks to speed up cooling the boiled coffee. 1) Boil only a little of the water with the coffee. Once it has boiled, add the rest of the water to the coffee mixture to cool the entire amount down to body temperature.

2) Pour the coffee mixture back and forth several times through the air from one container to another, even from the enema bag back into a cool pot. This will also cool it much faster.

NOTE: Body temperature feels hot when you place your finger in it. If the water is too hot or too cold, retaining the enema will be more difficult.

* Only when the mixture is about body temperature, strain the liquid through a fine strainer or coffee filter paper into a clean enema bag. Screw on the top of the enema bag. The enema is now ready.

2) *Using a coffeemaker.* This is more convenient for some people than the method above. The coffee does not come out quite as

strong, so you may be able to use a little more coffee. Simply place the water and ground coffee as above, but use a coffee maker.

To cool the coffee after it percolates, you may leave it in the cup for a few minutes, or start with only half a cup of water and add a room temperature water to the coffee after it is percolated.

3) *The non-boil method.* This is not quite as powerful but may be used if time is very important:

* Place 1 cup of ground coffee in a container with 2 cups of water. Stir the mixture thoroughly and allow it to soak overnight.

* In the morning, filter the liquid through coffee filter paper or a fine strainer. Place in a jar for storage in the refrigerator.

* To prepare an enema, pour 2 cups of purified water into the enema bag. Add 2 or 3 tablespoons of the coffee liquid from the jar.

Step 3. Preparing to take the enema

* Have a bowel movement before doing the enema. This is important, as otherwise you will not be able to retain the enema in most cases and there could be a mess on the floor! To have a bowel movement, the best method is to drink many glasses of spring or distilled water beforehand. You may also have something to eat or even use a laxative like prunes if needed.

If you have not had a bowel movement, take a plain water enema first, before the coffee enema. This will usually clean out the bowel quickly and effectively.

* Be sure the plastic hose is pushed or fastened well onto the enema bag and the thin enema tip is attached to the other end.

* Remove any air from the enema tube the following way. Grasp but do not close the clamp on the hose. Place the tip in the sink. Hold up the enema bag above the tip until the water begins to flow out. Then close the clamp. This expels any air in the tube.

* Lubricate the enema tip with a small amount of soap or oil. (Too much lubrication will cause the tip to fall out of the rectum, creating a mess!).

Step 4. Taking the enema

* The position preferred by most people is lying on one's back on a towel, on the bathroom floor or in the bathtub.

* With the clamp closed, place the enema bag on the floor next to you, or hang the bag about one foot above your abdomen.

* Insert the tip gently and slowly. Move it around until it goes all the way in.

* Open the clamp and hold the enema bag about one foot above the abdomen. The water may take a few seconds to begin flowing. If the water does not flow, you may gently squeeze the bag. If you develop a cramp, close the hose clamp, turn from side to side and take a few deep breaths. The cramp will usually pass quickly.

* When all the liquid is inside, the bag will become flat. Close the clamp. You can leave the tube inserted, or remove it slowly.

* RETAIN THE ENEMA FOR 15 MINUTES (less time is okay, but not quite as effective). See below if you have difficulties with this. You may remain lying on the floor. Use the time to read a book, meditate, etc. Some people are able to get up and go lie on a towel in bed, instead of on the floor. Walking around the house with the coffee inside is not recommended.

A small number of people are unable to retain even a cup of water for the required 15 minutes. One can start with less coffee or less water in these cases. There seems to be no harm if one wishes to retain the enema longer than 15 minutes.

Step 5. Finishing up

* After 15 minutes or so, go to the toilet and empty out the water. It is okay if some water remains inside. If water remains inside often, you are dehydrated.

* Wash the enema bag and tube thoroughly with soap and water.

* if you feel out of sorts or a little bloated after the enema, rub the top of the toes of both feet, but particularly the left foot. You can also rub the entire foot, especially any part that is tender. This will often balance out the body's energies after a coffee retention enema.

Hints regarding enemas:

* Remember, you will do best if you have a bowel movement before doing the coffee enema.

- * If intestinal gas is a problem, some exercise before the enema may eliminate the gas.
- * It is not essential but is helpful if the water fills the entire colon. You can assist by first lying on your right side for 5 minutes, then on your back for 5 minutes, and then on your left side for 5 minutes.
- * If water will not flow around the entire colon, you may gently massage your abdomen. Some people attach a 30-inch colon tube to the tip of the enema tube, and insert the tube so the water will reach the right side of the colon.
- * If the enema makes you jittery, reduce the amount of coffee.
- * The enema may lower your blood sugar. If so, eat something just before or after taking the enema.
- * If you have trouble holding the enema, here are suggestions.
 - 1) Be patient. Practice makes perfect.
 - 2) The water may be too hot or too cold. Be sure the water temperature is comfortable.
 - 3) It may help to place a small pillow or rolled up towel under your buttocks so the water flows down hill into your colon.
 - 4) If trouble continues, try reducing the amount of coffee or add 2 tablespoons of blackstrap molasses to the water.

For more information, read the article on this site entitled [Coffee Enemas](#).

Enemas in medical care. In more modern times, enemas and colonic irrigation, also called colon hydrotherapy, were used routinely in hospitals. There are many types of enemas used

for varying purposes. Technically, the coffee enema is a coffee implant and a retention enema. This means the enema implants coffee in the colon and the procedure is to retain the coffee mixture for 15-20 minutes.

History of the coffee retention enema.

I understand that coffee enemas were first used during World War I because nurses and doctors who lacked medicine for soldiers' pain found that coffee retention enemas took away pain. Coffee enemas were listed in the *Merck Manual* for many years. I learned about them from reading *A Cancer Therapy - Results of 50 Cases* by Max Gerson, MD. Dr. Gerson pioneered nutritional therapy for cancer and other diseases with excellent results. His therapy combined coffee enemas with a special diet, juices and a few other supplements. The enemas were an integral part of the therapy. Later, Dr. William Donald Kelley used them extensively in his metabolic cancer therapy, as it is called. He wrote about their benefits and importance in a small book entitled *One Answer To Cancer*.

The benefits of coffee enemas. The major benefit of the coffee enema is to enhance elimination of toxins through the liver. Indeed, endoscopic studies confirm they increase bile output. A patient was given a coffee enema while an endoscope monitored the entrance to the common bile duct. Within minutes of administering the enema, bile flow increased.

Other benefits are:

- **Increased alkalinity of the intestinal tract.** This is due to enhanced bile flow.

- **Astringent action on the colon.** Coffee acts as an astringent in the large intestine, helping clean the colon walls. A common contributor to ill health is the production and absorption of toxins within the small and large intestines. If food is not digested properly, sugars ferment and protein putrefies or rots. Both processes generate toxic chemicals which are then absorbed into the liver.
- **Improved digestion.** This is due to enhanced bile flow, and by killing or disabling harmful micro-organisms and parasites in the intestines, and perhaps other mechanisms such as alkalinizing the small bowel.
- **Enhanced liver activity.** This is due to the activity of the caffeine, and perhaps other components in the coffee. It also has to do with acupuncture theory. Technically, introducing water and coffee into the colon weakens the large intestine meridian somewhat. This can enhance the liver meridian in acupuncture theory. Commonly, the liver is weak and the intestinal meridian is often overstimulated by the presence of toxins in the large bowel. Even if it is not overstimulated, the effect of the coffee enema, in terms of acupuncture meridians, is to enhance the energy of the liver/gall bladder meridian to some degree.
- **Selenium.** Coffee contains some selenium, a mineral needed by most people. Taking the selenium by rectum apparently works better than taking it by mouth in some ways.
- **Protection against toxins in coffee.** Coffee contains some toxic metals such as lead and cadmium. However, it appears from our experience that when taken by rectum, these are not absorbed nearly as much as they are

when coffee is taken through the mouth. The colon is designed to filter out toxic substances and leave them in the colon, and to absorb mainly water. This may be one reason why drinking coffee is toxic, but coffee used in an enema is much less so.

- **Downward motion.** Retaining the enema for 15 minutes or so forces one's attention **downward** toward the pelvic area. This has a subtle and powerful healing effect. To read more about this, read the article on this website entitled [Downward Energy And Healing](#).
- **Yang effect.** Coffee is a fairly yang bean, especially when roasted, and for most people the coffee enema may have a yang effect on the body.
- **Sympathetic relaxation.** Coffee enemas cause relaxation of the sympathetic nervous system. This may seem odd, since they contain caffeine which is a stimulant. Possible reasons for relaxation of the sympathetic nervous system include: 1) stimulation of two important parasympathetic organs, the liver and the large intestine, 2) removal of irritating toxins from the body rapidly and thoroughly, 3) more subtle mechanisms that affect the nerve feedback in a way that inhibits the sympathetic nerves, 4) downward motion of energy.
- **Increased glutathione activity.** The compounds kahweol and cafestol found in coffee enhance glutathione S-transferase activity in the liver. This enzyme assists liver detoxification that neutralizes and helps remove a large variety of toxic compounds.
- **Improved hydration.** While it may seem minor, some people are quite dehydrated and the addition of several cups of water in the

enema improves this rather serious but hard to identify situation.

· **Improved etheric energy circulation.**
When one does a coffee enema, one must lock the root chakra or energy center. This is done by tightening the anal sphincter, which of course is necessary to retain the coffee solution. It is known in tantric yoga and other ancient texts that locking the root chakra helps the circulation of etheric energy in the body. While this is subtle, some people can feel the benefit of this practice.

· **Coffee is a strong warming agent.** Slow oxidizers, in particular, are often cold. This refers not only to their temperature, but to their general demeanor and yin condition. Coffee may be beneficial because it is a warming herb.

How often and when? Dr. Gerson recommended the coffee enema up to 6 times daily, or every four hours, for severely ill patients with cancer and other conditions. His patients continued them for up to several years with no ill effects.

This appears to be more than most people need, however. I usually suggest one enema per day to assist detoxification or to enhance liver activity. Two or perhaps even three enemas daily may be taken safely, however, especially during a healing reaction of if one feels much better by using them two or even three times daily for a few months or even longer.

For best results, a program of coffee enemas should be carried on for at least a year or much more. Many people, including myself, have

continued to take them for 10 years or more daily without any problem whatsoever. A good friend has used them continuously for almost 30 years as he suffers from a very chronic arthritic condition and continues to benefit from them. Not only has he had no ill effects from them that I can determine, but his health continues to improve to this day.

The best time to take a coffee enema is often in the morning, and after a normal bowel movement. One may get a slight rush from the caffeine, but it is not like drinking coffee, which I do not recommend. Coffee enemas taken in the evening may interfere with sleep, but not always. If one feels ill during the night, a coffee enema may help relieve the symptoms, such as a headache, and allow one to go back to sleep rapidly.

Cautions and contraindications. When done properly, coffee enemas do not cause habituation, constipation or any rectal problems. They will cause some constipation in a few cases, but often this is because the fecal matter is removed daily, so there is less to remove. In 30 years of clinical nutrition practice, I have not seen any significant negative effects of coffee enemas at all. However, observe the following cautions.

1. Hemorrhoids, anal or rectal fissures and rectal prolapse. These conditions, if severe, can make doing coffee enemas a little painful or even impossible. In my experience, mild cases of hemorrhoids are not a problem. Anal and rectal fissures can usually be healed quite easily. One excellent treatment is to place about 1-2 inches of very hot water in a bath tub. Add 4 pounds of Epsom salts to the water

and mix it thoroughly with your hand. Now sit in the bath water for about 20 minutes. Repeat this daily for several weeks or as long as it takes to heal the fissures.

If one has hemorrhoids, use extra care inserting the enema tip. Some people with hemorrhoids find the enemas irritating.

Another possible remedy if the ones above do not work is to first insert a well-lubricated colon tube in the rectum so that the coffee and water will be released far away from the fissures or hemorrhoids. A colon tube is usually a 30-inch soft rubber tube that is available on the internet. However, this may not solve the problem in all cases.

2. Problems retaining the coffee enema. A small number of people are unable to retain even a cup of water for the required 15 minutes. If you have this problem, try retaining it for 10 minutes, which is probably adequate. Also, you may begin using less coffee or less water in these cases. Retain the small amount for as long as possible, and then insert more, retaining that amount for as long as possible as well.

There seems to be no harm if one wishes to retain the enema longer than 15 minutes. Below are some other hints if you have trouble retaining the enema. While enemas may seem uncomfortable, many clients report the procedure is so helpful they soon forget the inconvenience.

3. Problems tolerating caffeine. Most people who cannot tolerate caffeine well are able to do coffee enemas without a problem. They may

need to begin with a very small amount of coffee until their bodies grow accustomed to the enemas. However, a very few clients could not tolerate any caffeine at all. These people were unable to use coffee enemas. At the time, I did think to have them try decaffeinated coffee, although this might have helped. Decaffeinated coffee usually still contains a small amount of caffeine.

There is no question that caffeine is a mild toxin to the body. However, in the enema it seems to have a different effect of stimulating the release of more bile from the liver. This is used in this procedure in a beneficial way.

4. Allergies to coffee. Occasionally I hear of a person who is allergic to coffee. This is very rare, however.

5. Yin problems. The coffee enema is somewhat yin, as it involves placing a fairly large amount of water in the colon, and water is yin. This is not a problem for most people. However, those who are more yang may find it objectionable. They may find themselves somewhat weakened by the coffee enema. While unpleasant, this is usually more than offset by the benefits of the procedure.

6. Upsetting digestion afterwards. A few people report digestive upset after a coffee enema. This may be a yin effect, described above, or an effect upon the kidney and liver meridians, both of which are stimulated by the coffee enema. It usually passes quickly. Rubbing the feet, especially the second and

third toes - all around these toes - is a reflexology method that seems to relieve this discomfort in many cases.

7. Lowering blood sugar. A coffee enema often will lower the blood sugar. This can cause some weakness and shakiness. Eating something soon after doing the enema generally relieves the situation.

8. Weakening the yin organs and enhancing the liver and kidney energy. These are energetic effects of the coffee enema. They are helpful for most people, which may be one reason why the coffee enema is so helpful for many people. Occasionally, they cause adverse effects of various kinds. One of these effects is a few people report worse posture with more kyphosis after an enema. This is temporary in all cases.

THE COFFEE ENEMA PROCEDURE

Note: This method recommends using 2-3 cups of water in the enema. You may use more, but it is not necessary. If you cannot hold the enema well, use less if needed.

Step 1. Materials

* **Buy a 2-quart enema bag with a clamp.** The enema/douche bag combination is easier to use. If you cannot find an enema bag at the local drug store, here is a link to buy one inexpensively online:

<http://www.walgreens.com/store/c/walgreens-combination-douche%2c-enema-and-water-bottle-system/ID=prod17207-product>

* **Buy any brand of regular coffee** - regular grind or flaked, non-instant and not decaffeinated. For maximum freshness, you may buy coffee beans and grind your own coffee, but this is not necessary. Organically grown coffee is best, though any coffee will do. Organic coffee is available at natural food stores. Store your coffee in the freezer for maximum freshness.

Step 2. Preparation of coffee

There are three methods. The coffeemaker and the boil methods are best.

1. Coffee maker. Place a cup or so of water in a coffee maker, along with $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon to 2.5 tablespoons of coffee and turn the machine one. When starting to do enemas, use less coffee in case you are sensitive to it.

When the coffee is ready, add more water to cool the mixture to body temperature. The coffee made with a coffeemaker will not be quite as strong as with the boil method, so you may need a little more coffee using a coffee maker.

2. The boil method.

* Place 2 to 3 cups of purified water and two to three tablespoons of coffee in a saucepan and bring to a boil (or use a coffee maker).

* Let it boil 5 minutes, then turn off the heat and allow it to cool. One or two ice cubes may be added to speed the cooling process. You

may make a larger quantity and use it for several enemas.

* Wait until the water is comfortable to the touch. If the water is too hot or too cold, retaining the enema will be more difficult. Strain the liquid through a fine strainer or coffee filter paper into a clean enema bag. Screw on the top of the enema bag. The enema is now ready.

3. The alternative non-boil method:

* Place 1 cup of ground coffee in a container with 2 cups of water. Stir the mixture thoroughly and allow it to soak overnight. (You may make a larger quantity if desired.)

* In the morning, filter the liquid through coffee filter paper or a fine strainer. Place in a jar for storage in the refrigerator.

* To prepare an enema, pour 2 cups of purified water into the enema bag. Add 2 or 3 tablespoons of the coffee liquid from the jar.

Step 3. Preparing to take the enema

* Be sure the plastic hose is pushed or fastened well onto the enema bag and the thin enema tip is attached to the other end.

* Remove any air from the enema tube the following way. Grasp but do not close the clamp on the hose. Place the tip in the sink. Hold up the enema bag above the tip until the water begins to flow out. Then close the clamp. This expels any air in the tube.

* Lubricate the enema tip with a small amount of soap or oil. (Too much lubrication will cause

the tip to fall out of the rectum, creating a mess!).

Step 4. Taking the enema

* The position preferred by most people is lying on one's back on a towel, on the bathroom floor or in the bath tub.

* With the clamp closed, place the enema bag on the floor next to you, or hang the bag about one foot above your abdomen.

* Insert the tip gently and slowly. Move it around until it goes all the way in.

* Open the clamp and hold the enema bag about one foot above the abdomen. The water may take a few seconds to begin flowing. If the water does not flow, you may gently squeeze the bag. If you develop a cramp, close the hose clamp, turn from side to side and take a few deep breaths. The cramp will usually pass quickly.

* When all the liquid is inside, the bag will become flat. Close the clamp. You can leave the tube inserted, or remove it slowly.

* **RETAIN THE ENEMA FOR 15 MINUTES.** See below if you have difficulties with this. You may remain lying on the floor. Use the time to read a book, meditate, etc. Some people are able to get up and go lie on a towel in bed, instead of on the floor. Walking around the house with the coffee inside is not recommended.

Step 5. Finishing up

* After 15 minutes or so, go to the toilet and empty out the water. It is okay if some water

remains inside. If water remains inside often, you are dehydrated.

* Wash the enema bag and tube thoroughly with soap and water.

Hints regarding enemas:

* If possible, do the enema after a bowel movement to make it easier to retain the coffee. If this is not possible, take a plain water enema first if needed, to clean out the colon.

* If intestinal gas is a problem, some exercise before the enema may eliminate the gas.

* It is not essential but is helpful if the water fills the entire colon. You can assist by first lying on your right side for 5 minutes, then on your back for 5 minutes, and then on your left side for 5 minutes.

* If water will not flow around the entire colon, you may gently massage your abdomen. Some people attach a 30-inch colon tube to the tip of the enema tube, and insert the tube so the water will reach the right side of the colon.

* If the enema makes you jittery, reduce the amount of coffee.

* The enema may lower your blood sugar. If so, eat something just before or after taking the enema.

* If you have trouble holding the enema, here are suggestions.

- 1) Be patient. Practice makes perfect.
- 2) The water may be too hot or too cold. Be sure the water temperature is comfortable.
- 3) It may help to place a small pillow or rolled up towel under your buttocks so the water flows down hill into your colon.

4) If trouble continues, try reducing the amount of coffee or add 2 tablespoons of blackstrap molasses to the water.

COFFEE ENEMA ARTICLE FROM THE TOWNSEND LETTER, FEB/MAR 2010, BY JULIE KLOTTER

Coffee enemas, used in the Gerson, Kelley, and Gonzalez cancer therapies, produce physiological effects that aid liver function and detoxification. The coffee enema, a common medical treatment during the early 20th century, was included in *The Merck Manual*, a standard medical reference book, from 1899 to 1977. Like other enemas, this one induces peristalsis and promotes evacuation of the intestine; but compounds in coffee have additional effects. Caffeine stimulates bile production in the liver and dilates the bile ducts. (Bile breaks down dietary fat and is a means by which the liver removes toxins.) The compounds kahweol and cafestol enhance glutathione S-transferase action. This detoxification system neutralizes a large variety of toxic compounds.

When mice eat green coffee beans as part of their diet, their glutathione S-transferase activity increases 600% in the liver and 700% in the small intestine, according to the National Research Council (Diet, Nutrition, and Cancer. National Academy Press; 1982:15-7,15-8). Roasted coffee has about 50% less glutathione-S-transferase-stimulating effect than green coffee, according to research by Lam, Sparnins and Wattenberg (Cancer Res. 1982;42:1193-1198).

So why not just drink lots of coffee? Drinking coffee is, after all, associated with reduced hepatic injury and cirrhosis in humans. Coffee enemas appear to be a more efficient way to get the benefits without getting a caffeine buzz. Most people, even those who tend to get jittery from drinking coffee, report relaxation after a coffee enema.

Chemical compounds in the gut enter the blood, which then goes directly to the liver via the portal vein. Gar Hildenbrand, of Gerson Research Organization (San Diego, CA), says: "Because the stimulating enema is retained for 15 minutes, and because all the blood in the body passes through the liver nearly every three minutes, these enemas represent a form of dialysis of blood across the gut wall."

Dr. Max Gerson viewed the coffee enema's detoxification activity as the reason that this treatment eases pain in many cancer patients. A clinical study performed by Dr. Peter Lechner and colleagues showed that coffee enemas, performed twice a day, "reduced the need for pain medications by 71.3%, 59%, and 22% respectively in cancer patients with WHO cancer pain level 1 (n = 91, P < 0.001), level 2 (n = 68, P < 0.05) and level 3 (n= 19 not significant due to small sample)."

Anecdotal cases also suggest that coffee enemas can relieve migraine headaches. Doctors who recommend coffee enemas to their cancer patients view the enemas as an important part of their protocols. None of them, however, claim that coffee enemas cure cancer.

People who choose to use coffee enemas to enhance liver detoxification and/or reduce pain should take the same precautions as in any

enema: use an enema bag with appropriate lubricated nozzle to avoid damaging the rectum or bowel; thoroughly clean the equipment after each enema to avoid reintroducing pathogens to the colon; and do not perform too many enemas within a short time.

Dangers. Ralph Moss reports that the US Office of Technology Assessment "cites the case of the two Seattle women who died following excessive enema use. Their deaths were attributed to fluid and electrolyte abnormalities. One took 10 to 12 coffee enemas in a single night and then continued at a rate of one per hour. The other took four daily. As OTA points out, 'in both cases, the enemas were taken much more frequently than is recommended in the Gerson treatment.'"

As Moss says: "In general, coffee enemas are an important tool for physicians who try to detoxify the body. This is not to say they are a panacea. They certainly require much more research. But coffee enemas are serious business: their potential should be explored by good research - not mined for cheap shots at alternative medicine or derisively dismissed as yet another crackpot fad."

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