

inside story

Naked from the waist down with a clear plastic tube protruding from between my legs is not how I usually conduct my reporting assignments, honestly. But this is the state I found myself in when I agreed to try out colonic hydrotherapy at a new clinic in Beckenham, writes **Sara Nelson**

When the Beckenham Therapy Rooms owned by Angelo D'Alberto offered me the chance to try out some of the treatments the clinic offers, I couldn't resist.

I arrive at the clinic feeling nervous. I'm looking forward to the massage but I'm not so sure about the second procedure.

Angelo quickly puts me at ease and I am led into a treatment room for my massage.

My therapist, Beth, massages me with almond oil. At the end of the hour, my shoulders, back, hands, feet and legs have been oiled and kneaded into a blissful state. So blissful I've forgotten I am about to have a tube inserted in my backside.

In another treatment room I have a chat with the colon hydrotherapist, Pamela, about why I've chosen this. At this point I confess to her I'm hungover and have only had four hours of sleep. I'm not in good shape and I'm feeling worse by the second.

However, Pamela is chatty and personable. She talks me through the equipment and what she'll be doing.

But despite my best efforts to relax, I find myself stumbling at the first hurdle. The tube won't go in. I've failed before I've started.

Pamela guides me through some deep breathing exercises as I try to calm down.

Eventually, after several goes, it happens and she reassures me the hardest part is over.

The colon hydrotherapy machine is switched on and I feel a slight pressure and

warm water begins to travel through the tube. I prop myself up on my elbows and stare at the tube, completely transfixed.

Nothing happens for a long time.

"There is a bit of fizzing in the water, which is not so good," she says.

I am angry with my colon. It has showed me up already.

Pamela attempts to counsel me through my nerves. She tells me to "let go".

She says: "All your life you've been trained not to go unless you're in the bathroom. It's perfectly natural. You just have to learn to let go."

I glare at the tube between my legs and will myself to "let go".

I pretend I'm relaxed, but my trembling knees give the game away. My body really, really, doesn't want to let go.

I'm getting frustrated as the water sloshes around and nothing happens.

I try some more deep breathing. I ask if I should push and Pamela has to remind me I'm not there to have a baby.

Eventually it happens.

I "let go" and we both stare, transfixed as the evidence travels through the clear plastic pipes and through a window in the machine.

I feel like cheering. I want to sing, I am so absurdly proud of myself.

After a little longer, Pamela says I am ready for my chamomile enema, to be administered by what is known as the gravity machine. My nerves start again. This sounds

bad. I lie still and watch while she pours chamomile, which is meant to relax the bowel, into what looks like an IV drip.

It's the same sloshy sensation, not painful, but odd. Pamela gently presses my stomach and encourages me to do the same. We pat my belly and peer at the tube.

I am disgusted and yet fascinated. I want more, I want to be sparkling inside!

I demand to know how my colon has performed and am reassured it has done a good job for a first timer at this procedure.

Apparently, the more often you have the treatment, the more successful it is.

Pamela tells me I have to change my diet. As a vegetarian, I rely heavily on pasta for convenience. I also tend to skip breakfast.

At the end the treatment, I stand up and am overwhelmed by a sensation I imagine is how it feels just before one's waters break.

I'm shown to a bathroom, where nature takes its course.

After a sit-down, a glass of water and a chat with Angelo, I stand up and am amazed at how physically light I feel. I'm expecting to feel sore but I'm not in the slightest.

What's more, my hangover is gone and I am remarkably clear-headed. I feel rejuvenated and sleep like a baby that night.

The treatment costs £60 for a session of £150 for three. Visit angelodalberto.com or beckenhamtherapyrooms.com, which will be going live shortly.

Alternatively, call **020 8658 5544**.

> Sara Nelson prepares for her colon hydrotherapy treatment

