

## CHRONIC CONSTIPATION AND ITS CURE

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The late Sir Arbuthnot Lane, a very eminent surgeon and physician, used to say that chronic constipation which he called 'chronic intestinal stasis' was at the bottom of most diseases and disorders, and especially was the cause of cancer. Lane was undoubtedly right in attaching the very greatest importance to the danger of auto-intoxication from the bowel, but the medical profession never accepted his view that constipation and auto-intoxication are the principal causes of cancer.

I have read the books and numerous articles and pamphlets by Sir Arbuthnot Lane and I must say that I have been greatly impressed by them. The normal small child and the normal animal have a bowel motion after every meal and this is more or less involuntary. And if you show a dog or a cat something nice to eat his mouth waters and he dribbles. The same happens to us human beings, only we swallow the saliva. As soon as we start eating the stomach pours out large quantities of gastric juice in preparation for the food to come—while the contents of the bowel are moved towards the exit for the same reason.

The baby who empties his bowels after every feed, or after nearly every feed, is promptly taught by a mother or nurse to have only one motion a day for the convenience of the household, and thus the natural excretory rhythm is destroyed and frequently the foundation is laid for chronic constipation and all the evils springing from it.

In many schools there is an insufficiency of lavatories. Frequently the child has to wait in a queue and school recommences before the desired relief has been accomplished. Young people, especially, girls, are shy. So they suppress their needs and gradually the natural impetus towards evacuation is completely destroyed and reliance on laxatives is firmly established.

The bowel content is apt to become poisonous or extremely poisonous if there is delay in the bowel and especially if the individual is a meat eater. Everyone knows the difference in smell between vegetarian dung of horses, cows, and sheep which is quite inoffensive, and the horrible stench of a cat's mess. Herein lies the reason that Mr. Ellis Barker puts all his patients on a vegetarian diet. In his opinion as in that of Sir Arbuthnot Lane, bowel stagnation of meat eaters is a very great danger to health. Theoretically the poisonous bowel contents of meat eaters are made innocuous by the secretions of the digestive system—but this is only theoretical. Specialists who have studied the action of the bowel have discovered that very frequently the bowel walls, especially if they have been weakened by constipation, the abuse of laxatives, etc. absorb the poisons contained in the bowel which thus get into the bloodstream and circulate through the whole of the body.

These poisons do much mischief. A very toxic person suffering from chronic constipation looks and feels as if he had been poisoned. A chain which is vigorously stretched breaks at its weakest link. The toxins circulating in the bloodstream of the constipated attack the weakest parts of the body. In some cases constipation leads to indigestion and many of the diseases of the digestive apparatus; to diseases of liver, gall bladder, pancreas, etc. In the opinion of Sir Arbuthnot Lane tuberculosis of the lungs is largely caused and frequently aggravated by the fouling of the bloodstream. The constipated have often a horribly muddy, blotchy, pimply skin. Not unnaturally, many skin diseases can be eliminated by appropriate bowel regulation.

The advertisements of pill manufacturers give a forceful and truthful picture of the condition of the constipated. They prominently point out the deep depression and melancholia of its victims. Hippocrates told us 2,300 years ago that melancholia in its early stages can be cured by laxatives. That statement of the Father of medicine still holds good. If energetic treatment is delayed too long then the victim begins to suffer from poisoning of the brain and incurable melancholia which fills the mental hospitals.

One may safely say that chronic constipation and auto-intoxication cause directly or indirectly numerous diseases and disorders and aggravate all known diseases without exception through the fouling of the blood-stream. Obviously, Sir Arbuthnot Lane was right in considering chronic intestinal stasis as actually and potentially the most important, and the most dangerous of diseases, and we can understand his attempt to enlighten the medical profession and laymen everywhere by a vigorous propaganda to which he devoted the last ten or fifteen years of his life.

How can chronic constipation be cured? The civilized nations are constipated, while primitive races have normally acting bowels, exactly as they have perfect teeth, large roomy mouths and throats which are not ornamented with enlarged and septic tonsils, adenoids and other gifts of civilization. The civilized are more dependent on their daily laxative than on their daily bread. Doctors 'cure' constipation with Cascara sagrada, Senna, etc., and everyone has his favourite pill, 'health salt' or 'liver salt'. Aspirin given for headache takes away the head pain but does not cure it. The various laxatives empty the bowel but do not cure its obstinate and habitual stagnation.

Primitive races which cannot easily procure pills and salts must have regularly acting bowels or they will die out through auto-intoxication. So they have to regulate their lives accordingly. They live on natural food which is eaten, as far as possible in its natural condition, while the civilized live on refined and over-refined foods which are artificially bleached, coloured and flavoured and from which food essentials such as bran, husks, skins, cores, etc., are eliminated.

General Sir Robert Mac-Carrison, M.D., that prince of researchers, has shown that when rats, rabbits, monkeys and other laboratory animals are

fed the refined diet of civilization they suffer from constipation and auto-intoxication and become victims to gastric and duodenal ulcers, appendicitis, colitis, etc. and if they are not too far gone, they may be restored to health when given natural entire foods.

To cure chronic constipation we must go back to nature. We must establish the three motions rhythm, a motion after every meal being the ideal. And we must live on entire natural food. Fruit and vegetables do not do much good if white bread and white flour are habitually taken. We can normalize the bowel in most cases by taking nine heaped table-spoonfuls of bran per day and eating wholemeal bread. The chronically constipated should, of course, not touch flesh, fish and fowl in any form and should take plenty of vegetables, salad, fruit, to keep their inside wholesome and they should take adequate quantities of liquid to prevent motions getting stiff and hard. Strong tea is constipating and aluminium cooking utensils produce constipation in some cases and diarrhoea in others.

Homoeopathy has excellent medicines for constipation, but these will prove unavailing if the patient lives and feeds wrongly. If constipation is due to dryness of mucous membranes Natrum muriaticum 3 or 30 will prove invaluable. Sulphur 6x on rising and Nux vomica 6x on going to bed has yielded excellent results since the time of Hahnemann. For howel torpidity Bryonia 3x or 30 may prove invaluable. For the most serious forms of constipation Alumina and Opium, both of which are very constipating in material doses, should be tried in the 30th potency. On purpose I do not enumerate and describe the numerous remedies of our materia medica which can be used for constipation. Obviously, if we wish to *cure* constipation, we must deal with the pernicious factors which cause it. Nutrition is more important than drugs in this connection.

Sometimes bowel action is gravely hampered by structural factors, such as kinks, narrowings, prolapse of bowel, etc. It would lead too far to deal with these conditions which can be clearly established by x-ray and which may require an enterotomic belt or surgical intervention.

—Heal Thyself, March 1946