

Question and Answer Resource

With Jini Patel Thompson
www.ListenToYourGut.com

Q and A with Jini Patel Thompson

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QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

WITH JINI PATEL THOMPSON

Question:

I just finished reading "The IBD Remission Diet" and am in the middle of "Listen To Your Gut." These books are fantastic! I wish they were around 30 years ago. You really did your research and wrap everything up in an easy-to-use presentation.

I have had Crohn's Disease for 30 years (diagnosed at 12), which has included 3 resections (always at the terminal ileum). I related to so much of what you say in the books. I too came from a medical family, but unlike you, I accepted the medications, surgeries, and constant "diet doesn't matter" mantra. It is fascinating to me why the majority of people follow traditional medicine and "take their medicine" like sheep, but there are also people like you who are able to question the GI's, traditional thinking, and find a better way.

A few years ago, I finally started looking elsewhere for relief. Like you, I tried the Specific Carbohydrate Diet. After a week, I felt the best I had felt in years. 3 months into the diet, feeling fine, I went in for a routine physical and was so anemic that I needed 2 transfusions. I still can't figure that one out, since I was eating plenty of meat. Maybe all the nut flour, fruits, and veggies irritated the intestine. Shortly after, I had surgery. Now, a few years later, I am on the verge of surgery again and exploring options - your IBD Remission Diet and the diet below (I'm still afraid of the SCD). I've not wanted to speak out against the SCD because it helps so many - but I definitely believe something is missing. The engineer in me wants to believe in a "one size fits all" cure for this disease. Since the disease is probably not even one disease, the idea of one cure is folly. Your flexible attitude is much better - the idea that everyone is different and everyone's path to healing may be different as well.

My question to you is if you have ever considered the "raw-food" cure that is out there. One book is "Self-Healing Colitis & Crohn's" by David Klein and can be found at www.colitis-crohns.com. The other book is "Healing Inflammatory Bowel Disease" by Paul Nison and can be found at www.rawlife.com.

Both of these authors had Ulcerative Colitis and followed a "Natural Hygiene" diet to heal themselves. One claims to have healed around a thousand people. Basically this diet is fruits, veggies, nuts, and seeds, along with plenty of rest, sunshine, fresh air, and positive thinking. No nuts, seeds, or raw veggies until the gut is healed - just veggie juices. Also, no meat or cooked food. The basic philosophy is that the body heals itself - we just need to give it the nourishment and rest that it needs to do so. Have you come across this? What do you think? I fully believe it would work - it seems that it might be difficult to follow, though.

One more question - If I listen to my gut, it will tell me to go get a pizza, a burger, french fries, and a 6-pack (seriously). Related to this, if you are allergic to something, your body

often craves it and will "tell" you to go for it. How do you know the difference between this and what your gut is "really" trying to tell you???

Thanks again for the great books, Jini.

- J. S., San Antonio, USA

Answer:

Thanks for the email with your kind words and for sharing about your process so far. Another interesting thing about the SC Diet is that following my time on it (I was on it for a full year) I had IgE and IgG blood tests to test for food allergies (done years after I finished the SC Diet) and all my results came back positive (allergic) for all the staples of the SC Diet (eg. eggs, the different nuts, honey, etc.). Now, through food intolerance testing (elemental diet followed by food re-introduction one by one) I was NOT allergic to these substances, but obviously something in my blood was still registering an immune response to them. And I believe this was a combined body/mind response to (a) consuming such large, consistent amounts of the same foods every day and (b) the psychological stress from the strictness of the diet and having to spend all my time in food preparation - which I hated.

Well, the important thing to keep in mind is that different things work for different people - I've heard from several people who've followed the SC Diet for years and are very happy with it and feel it works well for their body. And I'm sure there are many more people for whom this is true.

Which brings me to the Raw Food diets. In theory, I like these diets. Ideally, all of us should consume at least a portion of our food raw (although some plants have natural defense mechanisms blocking nutrient absorption that are only disabled via cooking) or at least only lightly steamed/cooked. If you could tolerate a completely raw diet, then great, go for it. Unfortunately, I've found that for many people with IBD, their digestive systems are simply too sensitive and impaired to tolerate raw foods and consumption can trigger a flare.

Thus, I like the diet which recommends only raw juices first, until you're healed enough to handle raw foods. Unfortunately, again, many people may not even be able to tolerate raw vegetable juices (I was one of them) and they may cause violent diarrhea, which can then trigger intestinal bleeding. Also, I don't know whether these diets would work if you were already at a low weight or suffering from malnutrition. If all you're going to consume is veggie juices for weeks (and/or raw veggies), you're going to lose some serious weight. Maybe you could throw in some whey protein (isolate) powder to counteract this (if you could tolerate the taste).

So, again, you really have to follow your own gut in this whole arena. If you feel a leaning towards trying a raw food diet, then give it a try, go slowly, and see how your body responds. If you follow your own body wisdom, you may also come up with novel ways of eating that work best for you. For example, I was contacted by a reader who was 2 months pregnant, and her symptoms flared terribly. She was worried about the effects of Prednisone on the fetus and was wondering if the IBD Remission Diet might be a better option. I agreed that it certainly would be better than Prednisone, but I was also concerned about the lack of phytonutrients (from plants) for the developing fetus. So, I suggested she try and see if she could tolerate a combination of the elemental diet

(Absorb Plus) along with raw vegetable juicing. She could and it worked a charm and her baby was born completely healthy and continues to do well two years later.

I believe the best thing for all of us is to be open to all sources of knowledge and information and then bring that home to our gut and listen to what our body says feels right for us. And continue to listen/stay open. Your body may want raw food, but only for a week, then it might want something else, then back to raw food for a month, then something else, etc. (for example). As long as you're listening to and following your own body's wisdom, you'll do well in the long-term.

Regarding pizza and beer: When most people ask their gut what it wants to eat, they're usually asking their tastebuds - not their gut. Likewise with 'cravings' for foods you're actually allergic to, or addictive foods like sugar. Connecting with your gut (i.e. digestive system) will not give you same answer as if you ask your 'body' which usually means you're asking your tastebuds, or, the corresponding region of your brain. For example, 'hunger' is regulated by the stomach itself. But 'satiety' (feeling satisfied and not wanting any more food) is regulated by the brain. How many times have you been eating a meal and been offered seconds or thirds and you say, "Oh no, I couldn't eat another bite, I'm absolutely stuffed!" as you pat your distended, obviously full belly. But then your host brings out a mouthwatering chocolate torte and all of a sudden you find you have room in your stomach after all and actually WANT to put more food in your mouth? This is because whilst your hunger is certainly fulfilled and your stomach/gut has indeed had enough, the centre in your brain that controls satiety has not had enough of the tastes of cream, chocolate, etc. and thus you want to eat more. It is not your gut that wants to eat the cake, it is your tastebuds. Follow the instructions in "Dialoguing With Your Body" in Chapter Six of LISTEN TO YOUR GUT for guidelines on how to do this. Unfortunately, there are no shortcuts and if you want to pursue the path of natural/holistic healing, this is a skill you're going to have to develop.

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Question:

Dear Jini, Thank you so much for listening to our challenges with constipation. I totally appreciate your help. Our daughter is 7 months old - she has been constipated for approximately 3 months. For the last 3 months, she has had approximately a dozen unassisted bowel movements. We have to give her an enema for her to have a bowel movement. This happens usually every 3 or 4 days - sometimes we have waited over a week. However, the longer we wait the more agonizing it is for her. When she was on just breastmilk, she had 3 - 4 movements/day - consistency like mustardy, fatty breast-milk movements. Now, I give her Enfamil A+ with Iron. There seems to be soy in the ingredients but otherwise I can't tell. This is what we had when we were in the hospital. Also, we gave her pabulum on the advice of both of our mothers to get her to sleep through the night. Perhaps a bit early at the 4 month mark. We have tried many things to try and help her - prune juice, water, sugar water, fruit, vegetables, massage, (3 months of acupuncture and herbs - hundreds of dollars later...). Also at first we gave her suppositories, however it seemed to be a long term issue so we stopped to avoid dependency. Now we have to give her salt water enemas - otherwise she pushes and pushes to no avail - it is heart-wrenching to watch. The water seems to flush her system and enable her to pass stool more easily. It is painful for her. What she does pass are

hard nuggets usually larger than a golf ball. Our Chinese doctor says she has a weak spleen and digestive system. The acupuncture treatment, although good, seemed to be slow and we are running out of funds. Agh!! What to do? Jini, thanks so much for anything you might be able to offer.

- C. M., Alberta, Canada

Answer:

Your poor little darling - it must be agonizing to have her go through this! When I started my daughter on solids at 5.5 months, she became constipated for up to 6 days at a time and it nearly killed me to watch her pass those HUGE solid bowel movements. So, based on all my knowledge and experience (you can see my books at www.caramal.com), here's my opinion on what I think would work for your girl:

1. Immediately get her started on Natren brand's Life Start (*B. infantis*) probiotic. 1/4 tsp. 3x/day. Once she's pooping regularly, cut it back to twice a day, and then after two months of that, cut it back to only 1/8 tsp. 2x/day. Once she's eight months old, add Natren's MegaDophilus (*L. acidophilus*) probiotic (1/8 tsp) as well. The best way to give her the probiotics is to put them into a little dish, dip your finger in the dish and then let her suck your finger, rub it on her gums, etc. Give it to her on an empty stomach - 15 mins. before food or formula. If you can't give it to her this way, you can add it to her formula bottle, but it will be less effective that way. Remember to keep the probiotics refrigerated at all times. DO NOT substitute another brand of probiotic - it has to be Natren for both safety and efficacy issues. Once bowel function has normalized, continue on the probiotics for at least 3 more months. Thereafter, use only once a day, or sporadically as needed.
2. Iron is very constipating (has anyone told you this?) so if you can get an iron-free formula, do so. If you're worried about her getting enough iron, then just puree some cooked spinach or seaweed for her (you can add fruit or yams to it if she doesn't like the taste straight). I prefer goat's milk to any formula (preferable protein source), so try her with that if possible. Or, you can also get formulas that have goat milk as the protein source - if you can't find one, then check the Internet. If you're still breastfeeding, it would be best to simply cut out the formula altogether and just feed her solids and breastmilk.
3. Every time you give her an enema, you're disrupting her bacterial flora in her bowel. An unbalanced bacterial flora (too much bad bacteria) is the primary cause of constipation. So, the probiotics (good bacteria) will address this root cause of the problem, but as long as you keep giving the enemas, you'll also be washing out a lot of the good bacteria. So, two ideas on how to get round this....(a) when you give her an enema, instead of putting salt in the water, put 1 tsp. of Life Start probiotic in the enema water and/or (b) when you first start her on the Natren's probiotic, try to wait 4 days to give it a chance to implant and see if the probiotics alone will normalize bowel function that quickly. Also the next point will also help facilitate bowel movements....
4. For her cereal, take her off any rice or wheat cereal and give her oatmeal or barley cereal instead. Mix this cereal with 2 parts pureed fruit (e.g. 1 tbsp. cereal, 2 tbsp. fruit) and 1/4 tsp.- 1/2 tsp. of Udo's or Flax Oil. Not only will the oil help

her bowels, but it is fantastic for brain development, skin, connective tissue, nails, hair, etc. Get the Udo's oil if possible, if that's too expensive, then just cold-pressed, organic flax oil is also good. Mix it all with a good amount of warm water - as runny as you/she like.

5. Try to get her to drink as much water as possible. We always give Zara a bottle of water on her tray table with her meals, so she can drink as much as she likes whilst feeding and then we leave her playing with the water at the end of the meal. If she can't hold the bottle yet, then just keep offering it to her periodically whilst feeding her solids and then again at the end of the meal. Adding extra water to her formula will not have the same effect as her drinking pure water. When you take her out, don't take a bottle of juice, take water (filtered or spring only).

When these therapies begin to take effect, she may have multiple bowel movements for days in a row. This is a good thing as she probably has a lot stuck in there that needs to be cleaned out.

Important: The probiotics do not cause bowel movements, they NORMALIZE bowel function. If she were suffering from chronic diarrhea, the treatment would be the same. If she continues to have lots of bowel movements, or they're really liquid for more than 10 days, then cut back the amount of oil in her cereal.

Anyway, hope that helps you out and please keep me posted on how it goes. The Natren probiotics are the key and banished my girl's constipation in 2 days - but if we missed a dose (in the first 2 weeks of therapy), she would not have a bowel movement that day.

Follow-Up Email:

WOW!!!! thank you so much for your reply. You are a wealth of information. I am realizing there is so much we don't know and it is so hard to get good information. We have implemented a diet without rice, formula, and more pureed fruit and water since your last email. She has had two bowel movements a day for the last three days. This is such an improvement!! So, for now things are improving - however, it sounds like the Life Start would normalize her system and perhaps set a foundation for the years to come. I will keep you posted on how it goes and again thank you so much!!

- C.M., Alberta, Canada

Note from Jini: It is over a year later, as I write this, and this baby's bowel movements have continued to be normal.

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Question:

Hi Jini, just wanted to write you a quick note to let you know how I am doing! I have done the remission diet for just over five weeks now and I started introducing food this week. I feel that I have made some improvements in my health, but I still feel that I am on a

much longer healing journey that will take some time! I went off all my meds (azathioprine, pentasa, cipro, metronidazole) at the same time as I started the diet. At the same time I have been supplementing with grape seed extract, coenzyme Q10, vit C, mucosaheal, Chitaq - NAG, fish oil, ferrasorb iron, hydroxy-cal, zinc and george's aloe vera. I have had some problems with swollen nodules coming up on my body as well as very sore joints. It got so bad last week that I had to resort to starting a short course of prednisone. The prednisone helps but I feel as though I may be counter-acting the other immune-enhancing supplements which is confusing and frustrating. I also have been struggling with some anal fissures (fissureheal is not going to be available for another 3 weeks, unfortunately!). My gastroenterologist did a colonoscopy right before I started the remission diet and he said that it was only my large bowel that had inflammation throughout it. I was wondering if you know of any supplements or treatment that targets this area? I have also started some cranial-sacral therapy. I am still very hopeful that I can get my condition under better control than it is now. Maybe it will just take time?! Thanks for your support! Also thank you for sending me the list of therapists in the Vancouver area, I really appreciated you taking the time to do that!

Answer:

Congratulations on completing a difficult but very worthwhile task!! Unfortunately, yes, you are counter-acting the supplements. Prednisone is a VERY damaging drug. Doctors have gotten so used to prescribing it though, that they seem to forget it should be a severely restricted drug. When it was first released, the pharmaceutical companies themselves warned that it should 'only be used in life-threatening conditions'. So you need to ask yourself: are my sore joints and nodules life-threatening conditions? Re-read Ch.1 of Listen To Your Gut; you're going to go through cycles and spirals in your health as you heal yourself, and if you want to support the long-term, holistic healing of your body, you're going to have to try to get through these times without resorting to drug use. Otherwise it's going to take you a lot longer to heal yourself because you'll be in a 'two steps forward-one step back' pattern. Of course, if you'd rather take longer and feel more comfortable being able to use the drugs, that's up to you. Follow your gut and you'll know what's right/best for you. Personally, I suspect the sore joints and nodules may be side-effects or detox symptoms from one or a combination of the drugs you've been on (they are documented side effects of Asacol, for example). The MucosaHeal, George's Aloe Vera, NAG, and CoQ10 all directly target the large bowel and there's nothing more you really need to do for it, aside from the Natren probiotics – as both sore joints and erythema nodosum have been shown to be caused by bacteria. Have you started those yet? All in all, sounds great and your progress sounds wonderful, I'd say you're really on track!

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Question:

About a year and a half ago I ordered Jini's book "Listen To Your Gut", which I found to be very positive and motivational. I suffer from Ulcerative Colitis and am I'm wondering if she's written any follow up books. In particular any information about Pregnancy and Colitis/IBD? How it may be affected etc.? Thank you!
- Gianna M., Calgary, Canada

Answer:

To answer your question more directly, pregnancy affects everyone differently. Some people find it exacerbates their inflammation/symptoms and other people find their symptoms improve - some to the point of full remission. Following are the supplements that I have used during my 2 pregnancies and found to cause no adverse effects (and lots of benefits!) However, this is my experience only (and a few others I know personally) so use at your own risk/discretion. There's no published information available on the safety of George's Aloe Vera Juice, Astragalus, or L-Glutamine during pregnancy. The other supplements are all published as being safe for pregnant women:

- George's Roadrunner Aloe Vera Juice - but ONLY this brand, do NOT substitute another as many are not safe during pregnancy due to a component that stimulates contraction of smooth muscle tissue like the bowel and uterus (this component has been completely removed from George's brand).
- Natren's Probiotics - Healthy Trinity; bulgaricus, bifidum and acidophilus - 1/4 tsp. of each in 1/2 glass water right before bed on an empty stomach, and then again in the morning, 20 minutes before breakfast. Georges' Aloe Vera and Natren Probiotics both really help if you're experiencing heartburn (among their other benefits - see book for more details). Don't substitute another brand of probiotics as you may not get the same results.
- L-Glutamine - I've taken up to 1000mg per day on an empty stomach and up to 3000 mg per day when mixed in a protein or Absorb Plus shake
- Full spectrum of vitamins and minerals, including trace minerals. I took Nature's Way Prenatal (capsules) while pregnant and breastfeeding
- Up to 6000 mg. of Vitamin C per day in mineral ascorbate form only (NO ascorbic acid) eg. calcium ascorbate, magnesium ascorbate. A product called Emergen-C is a really tasty naturally flavored drink packet you just mix with water
- Up to 30 drops per day (in divided doses) of Herb Pharm's liquid tincture Astragalus when immune system feels run down, or battling a cold or illness (do not take if you already have a fever as it induces added sweating)
- One Absorb Plus elemental shake per day (automatically contains 1000 mg. L-Glutamine per shake) with 1 tbsp. of flax or Udo's oil (great for fetal brain development) and 30 mg CoEnzyme Q10, 30 mg Pynogenol or Grape Seed Extract added. I would also add my 2 prenatal vitamin/mineral capsules (see above) and whip it all together in the blender, then pour over ice. Great way to get important nutrients for me and baby and about 500 calories per shake.

You can also take all these things while breastfeeding and if your baby gets a cold, the Astragalus and Vit.C will get rid of it very quickly - but again, don't use Astragalus if baby has a fever. If baby is vomiting, diarrhea or has a bacterial infection, definitely take the Natren probiotics for the duration of the illness (the probiotics will be passed to baby through your breastmilk) and then for 1 month following. Also ALWAYS follow antibiotic use with probiotic supplementation, both for baby and you. If you're formula feeding,

contact Natren Inc. for guidelines on adding their probiotic Life Start (*B. infantis*) to baby's formula bottles.

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Question:

I went to the website to look at the new book you have written about the elemental diet and was very impressed with all the research and time that must have gone into putting such a book together. Since doctors don't prescribe steroids for the treatment of IBS (as they would if one was diagnosed with IBD), are you certain that this elemental diet would help someone with IBS? Even though many of the symptoms are similar in IBS and IBD (except the bleeding), aren't there totally different mechanisms involved with these different conditions? From what I've read, many doctors are of the mindset that there is a "miscommunication" going on between the gut and the brain in IBS, whereas in IBD there is signs of inflammation, etc. that means there is a disease process going on, which is not the case with IBS. The elemental diet sounds like it will not be an easy thing to stick to. I know as hard as it is, if there is hope for even the slightest bit of improvement, my fiance would try it. He can barely eat anything without having problems, especially at night. Breakfast never seems to bother him, but he is always in pain after he eats his dinner and has full blown "attacks" of diarrhea two or more times a week now. He has gotten very thin and weak. Even his skin looks like it's taken on a "gray" tinge to me. I'm very worried about him. He also suffers regularly from mouth sores (canker), which are very painful and also make it very hard for him to even drink water when he gets them. Do you know if these are related to IBS? Also, the cost of the Absorb Plus is very expensive (almost \$5.00 a shake). I know he would not be able to afford using in exclusively for the length of time that would probably be necessary to see any benefit from it. Is there any possibility that it could be made more affordable? Again, thank you for your time and help.

- Christine M., NY, USA

Answer:

Yes, I do believe The IBD Remission Diet would help someone with IBS - but he would probably only need to go on it for 2 weeks, I'd think. I know doctors see IBS and all the different Inflammatory Bowel Diseases as being completely separate from each other. Personally, I see them more as points along a continuum and have heard from many people who started out with IBS and then developed Colitis, or started with Colitis and then developed Crohn's. Then the doctors say, Oh, well you must have been misdiagnosed the first time. And likewise, when they heal themselves and show their doctor my book, their doctors tell them they were misdiagnosed and never had Crohn's/Colitis in the first place - must just have been an intestinal infection! Anyway, each person has to decide what's right for them and what types of healthcare they'd like to try, and as everyone's condition is different, there are no guarantees.

At this point, based on what you've told me so far, I'd recommend the following, all SIMULTANEOUSLY, for a period of three months. Just doing one or two of these points will not have the same healing effect as they work synergistically:

- Follow the Reduce Diarrhea Diet (once diarrhea ceases, move to Maintenance Diet)

- Take L-Glutamine (once diarrhea is resolved, switch to N-Acetyl Glucosamine - NAG) and George's Roadrunner Aloe Vera Juice (do not substitute another brand)
- Take Natren brand probiotics in POWDER form mixed in filtered or spring water (no chlorine from tap water allowed), before bed (on an empty stomach) and then again in the morning (followed 20 minutes later by breakfast). Get the *bifidum*, *bulgaricus* and *acidophilus* powders, you must use this brand and all three together.
- Go for either craniosacral therapy (see book) or hypnotherapy (has had excellent results with IBS and I myself find it very effective and quick to produce results).

I would think he'd see substantial relief from following the above (all of which he would also automatically do by following The IBD Remission Diet), if not a return to normality. This way, he probably could avoid the expense of an elemental diet. However, if he needs to gain weight, he can also use the Absorb Plus 1-3 times a day (whatever he can afford) along with his regular diet. I know, based on emails like yours, that the company is currently looking at revising their discount schedule, which should bring the price down significantly - I'm sure they'll be in touch and let you know. Or, he could just use whey isolate protein powder (with no added artificial ingredients or preservatives!) blended with water, flax oil and fruit (extra-ripe bananas are usually well tolerated) which would be cheaper than Absorb Plus too - since he doesn't need the ingredients to be elemental (pre-digested). Mouth ulcers are often involved with IBS/IBD and quite common. Does the DGL or Wild Oregano Oil (in the book) work for him at all with these?

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Question:

I would like to thank Jini for writing this book. This has been a tremendous help to me. Some of the diet suggestions and environmental factors I had discovered on my own, but the supplementation section, and bodywork therapies have really made a difference. I started L-Glutamine, NAG, and Natren probiotics, and am seeing much improvement. I have also started dialoguing with my body, because after reading this book, I realized that I treated my colon as a separate entity that I used to get mad at, instead of treating my colon and mind as one, and nurturing them both. I am still having one problem...I cannot seem to pass gas without having a small bowel movement come out with it. I used to have mucous come out when I passed gas, anywhere from 1 tablespoon to 1/4 cup. I started on the Natren probiotics about 2 weeks ago, and within 12 days, the mucous stopped. Now, I have stools coming out when I pass gas. The stool that comes out is diarrhea-like (brown and very loose), never formed, and still anywhere from 1 tablespoon to 1/4 cup. The pressure of this is awful! The only time I have diarrhea is when I have gas, so should I be on the Reduce Diarrhea Diet? Other than the gas, I go to the bathroom twice a day, and it is all formed. So I am confused as to which diet I should be on? I am currently taking Asacol. When I first started your healing techniques, I was on Bentyl and canasa suppositories as well. I decided to go off of those two medications first because I had not been on them that long. The Asacol however, I have been on since I developed the disease 9 years ago, so I am a little hesitant about getting

off of it. Although, it has not seemed to help in 9 years. I would not be surprised if that was giving me some gas, actually. I know you cannot give me medical advice, but in your opinion, do you think that tapering off the Asacol slowly would help? If I could just resolve this last problem, I would be healed. But, because of this, I am still running to the bathroom, feeling like I am not going to make it. I was just wondering if Jini had any suggestions for me? Thank you again, and take care.

- Nicole Z., New York, USA

Answer:

The Natren probiotics work really well because they're one of the few probiotics from a human strain of bacteria - most are from porcine (pig) or bovine (cow) strains. So even though they're more expensive, I think they're well worth using and your experience certainly confirms that. 1/4 cup of mucous - wow! That's a very big improvement to have that cleared up so fast - the NAG also helps heal the mucosal lining (which would regulate mucous production as well). Anyway, based on what you've told me, I would suggest (and these are only my suggestions, please follow your own gut first!) a two-pronged approach:

1/ I would address the gas/flatulence problem by following the appropriate diet from the book. Sounds like the *Minimize Gas & Bloating Diet* should work well for you at this point - no need to follow the *Reduce Diarrhea Diet*. When you do have a bowel movement, use the *Colonic Massage* technique to move as much gas and stool around and out at the same time as possible. Interestingly, I just had an email a few days ago from a woman who says she experienced bloating and weight gain from taking Asacol. Both subsided once she stopped the Asacol and took some of the supplements recommended in the book. So that may indeed be your culprit - there's only one way to find out. In my opinion, L-Glutamine, NAG and George's Roadrunner Aloe Vera Juice provide more protection for the mucosal lining than either Asacol or Salazopyrin. The Natren probiotics also provide long-term protection for the mucosal lining, so if you take all of them you should be pretty well covered! But again, only do what feels safe/right for you.

2/ I would also find an experienced bodywork therapist to work specifically on your colon and rectum to relax and release the tissue. Look for someone skilled at craniosacral therapy, visceral manipulation and myofascial release (all 3 is best). If you can find someone who is qualified to work internally (rectally) and if you feel comfortable with this, that would probably be the fastest route. If not, don't worry, a LOT can be done by working externally. You may have restrictions or traumatized tissue that is causing your rectum to spasm. The feeling of weight/pressure and urgency are also indicative of this. Also, try and connect with the emotional feelings located in this area of your body. You can do this either via Dialoguing with your Body, or with a craniosacral therapist who is also skilled/trained in somato-emotional release. Be picky, sometimes it can take a lot of trial & error to find the right practitioner. I know that NY is the center for a lot of advanced courses on the bodywork therapies I mentioned, so if you do a search you may be able to phone the organizations for referrals. The Upledger Institute (www.upledger.com) is one of the top schools for craniosacral. Also, if you contact some of the serious yoga or alternative healing schools around there they should have some good referrals for you too. Barbara Brennan (author of *Hands of Light*) used to have a training school in NY for energy healers, if that's still around then they would probably be able to refer you to some accomplished therapists.

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Question:

I thoroughly enjoyed your book but seem to be gaining too much weight now. I am not eating that much but can't seem to overcome the weight gain - any ideas? One thing that helped me digest my food easily was aloe juice. That mixed in my favorite juice and following the steps in your book, my Crohn's is now dormant. Thank you. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving.

- Eilene M., Claymont, USA

Answer:

If you're having unexplained weight gain that really doesn't make sense, then you may want to have your hormone levels checked out. You must see an MD or ND who specializes in hormones though, as the regular ones don't have enough training to interpret test results and symptom profiles accurately. You could also pick up a book by John Lee, MD and Jesse Hanley, MD called "What Your Doctor May NOT Tell You About Premenopause". Don't get misled by the title, it's really one of the best books I've read for tracking and deciphering hormonal imbalances (often caused by steroids, immuno-suppressive drugs, birth control pill, etc.). Another reader also wrote in about a book she found really helpful to lose 15 lbs. worth of bloated belly and fluid: "The False Fat Diet" by Elson Haas, MD. The book elaborates how weight gain is often caused by food allergies or intolerances and once you eliminate the offending foods, the excess weight just drops off. So maybe check out the description of that one (on Amazon) too. Hope that helps you out. Also, just so you know, Absorb Plus is not just used for weight gain. It's basically just a high quality source of easily absorbed nutrients - so your body actually receives all the benefits of what you're consuming. I heard from one reader recently who used it to lose 12 lbs, without suffering energy drops, and he says the weight has stayed off.

* * * *

Question:

I have a daughter recovering from cancer who is currently being fed through a tube in her stomach. We tried Absorb Plus orally and through the feeding tube and thought the taste was good, but the product was inappropriate for feeding through the stomach tube as we found it tends to clog the tube and stick to the sides. The feedings take place over an hour and a half or so, so although the Absorb Plus seemed to blend well, perhaps too much sediment settles over that long period of time. I feel it's a real shame as the ingredients are exactly what we wanted. So, a question for you: Do you have any idea as to how we could alter things to make it work better with Absorb Plus and the tubing apparatus?

- Rebecca O. Halifax, Canada

Answer:

I passed this question on to my sister-in-law, Dawn Patel, who's a pediatric nurse, and she had the following ideas:

"I would suggest that the parent split the Absorb Plus in half - put half in the feeding bag at a time - shaking very well before putting formula into the bag...maybe in a sealed container. Giving the bag a shake occasionally would stir it up so sediment doesn't stay on bottom. When tube is clogged, use a syringe full of ginger ale (2nd choice would be soda water) to unclog - probably a good idea to push ginger ale through prophylactically every 1/2 hour - or as they find is needed. (a 3-5cc syringe - if too much is used, the bubbles could cause too much gas). Is this person receiving any meds through her tube? There are a few drugs that are like cement in those tubes. Biaxin is the worst I can remember - is often used in Crohn's, HIV and cancer patients with infections. There is probably increased sediment since AP is mixed at home - maybe not completely mixed? The products most hospitals use come ready in a liquid form so there is no sediment. I think all the bad fat in them likely keeps everything from separating - and probably is filtered as well. For your information - in case another question arises in future; the normal naso-gastric tubes unplug in a similar fashion, using a little more ginger ale. However, the silastic (long-term placed naso-gastric tubes) are more difficult to unplug since they sort of cave into themselves and stick to the clog."

* * * *

Question:

Your book was recommended to me by a woman I met through your site who went from being almost 'on her deathbed' from UC to a bubbly, happy and energetic woman due to the diet in your book. I bought the book 'Listen to your Gut' and have found it extremely helpful in getting back to my energetic and healthy self apart from one thing....mucous... the diarrhea has gone and the urge to run to the toilet 10 times a day has gone but I still have mucous. I am following the diet rigorously and don't know what else I should take or cut out to get rid of the mucous. Please help!!! Also how do you keep it in remission - will it stay away if I keep to the Maintenance Diet? Great to hear you have a new book. How different will your new book be....The IBD Remission Diet. How helpful would it be to me as I have the 'Listen to your Gut' book? My last question is: You mentioned taking Absorb Plus when you are pregnant and for breastfeeding...could you give me more information as I would like to try and have another baby but am worried about my health when pregnant and the baby's subsequent nutrition. Many thanks - look forward to hearing from you.

- Hilary T., Melbourne, Australia

Answer:

I'm glad to hear you're doing so well! Okay, to answer your first question. Excessive mucus production seems to suggest that a) either you're eating a food/substance that your body doesn't like (food allergy/intolerance), or b) there's still a fair amount of inflammation present so your intestines are producing mucus in an effort to soothe things, or, your mucosal lining is just not functioning properly. Let's look at the first possibility: top mucus-producing foods are soy and dairy, so try cutting those out and

see what happens - do you currently eat/drink either? Also, try to get in touch with your intuition and/or do some experimenting with other foods/drinks you think may be triggering mucus production.

Secondly, in terms of therapy to directly address inflammation/mucosal lining secretions, I would recommend the following (some of which you may already be doing from the LTYG book):

1/ MucosaHeal (www.mucosaheal.com) on an empty stomach should help to restore your mucosal lining and soothe inflammation as it contains the following beneficial substances:

- Deglycyrrhizinated Licorice - reduces muscle spasms, promotes adrenal gland function, soothes inflammation and fights bacterial, viral and parasitic infection. Increases number of mucus-secreting cells in intestine which improves the quality of the mucosal lining, lengthens intestinal cell life and enhances microcirculation in the gastrointestinal tract. It must be deglycyrrhizinated though, otherwise continued use can cause liver damage and high blood pressure (none of these problems exist with the deglycyrrhizinated form).
- Slippery Elm - good for diarrhea and ulcers when taken internally. Soothes inflamed mucous membranes of the stomach, intestines and urinary tract.
- Marshmallow Root - soothes and heals mucous membranes, skin and other tissues. Aids the body in expelling excess mucus and fluid.
- N-Acetyl Glucosamine (NAG) on an empty stomach (see book for dosage) - an amino sugar that forms the basis of complex molecular structures that are key parts of the connective tissue and mucous membranes of the body - tendons, ligaments, cartilage, bone matrix, skin, synovial (joint) fluid, and intestinal lining. To maintain healthy absorption and digestion of food, the body needs a healthy mucosal lining to lubricate and protect the digestive tract. It is also an immune system modulator with anti-tumor properties.

2/ And lastly, are you currently on a full-spectrum probiotic? If not, take *acidophilus*, *bifidus*, and *bulgaricus* bacteria: Natren is my favorite brand and guaranteed quality/efficacy. Take either their Healthy Trinity capsules, or, their Mega-Dophilus, Digesta-Lac and Bifido-Factor powders (1 tsp of each) mixed together in 8 ounces of water (get the non-dairy base). Dosage instructions are on the bottles, take just before bed on an empty stomach (so bacteria has the whole night to implant and colonize) and then again in the morning 20 minutes before breakfast. Continue for 2-3 months and then only as needed for maintenance - let your bowels be your guide. A good bacterial flora is absolutely imperative to proper bowel and digestive function.

Okay, now to answer your 2nd question: My second book, THE IBD REMISSION DIET, differs from LISTEN TO YOUR GUT in that while LTYG is a compendium of natural treatments, THE IBD REMISSION DIET is one specific diet and supplementation program that you follow for 3-6 weeks to induce disease remission and heal the GI tract. It shows you how to use an elemental diet (a completely liquid, pre-digested diet, also outlined in Ch.3 of LTYG) and specific herbal supplementation plan to accomplish the following things:

- Completely heal the gastrointestinal tract and mucosal cell lining
- Repopulate with good bacteria, to re-establish a healthy bacterial flora in small and large intestine
- Restore health and balance from the cellular level on up throughout the immune system
- Perform a planned re-introduction of food, at the end of the elemental diet, so you can pinpoint your particular food allergies and intolerances, and maintain ongoing health.

It's a very easy to follow, step-by-step instruction book of how to follow the program and the detailed ways it will benefit your body. There are also many clinical trials supporting the effectiveness of an elemental diet to induce disease remission and a quick Internet search will provide you with lots of data. In 2 of the latest studies (done in England and Italy and presented in May 2002), the presenters concluded that:

"elemental diet therapy is as effective as steroids in inducing remission, whilst avoiding steroid side effects" - Dr. Bhupinder Sandhu

"In children with active Crohn's disease, exclusive nutritional therapy shows a more rapid effect than steroids in inducing clinical remission and is markedly more effective than steroids in producing healing of mucosal inflammation" - Dr. Robert Canani.

Now, to answer your final question: As long as you can absorb the needed nutrients from your food (or added supplements) you'll be able to have a healthy fetus/baby. Studies have shown the primary determinant of a child's health (one study followed them for 17 years) is the mother's nutrition while in utero. Funnily enough, I went on THE IBD REMISSION DIET before each of my two pregnancies and continued to take the elemental shakes (Absorb Plus) with supplements as needed throughout pregnancy and breastfeeding. I have had strong, healthy pregnancies and healthy babies. So, basically, ideally you want to be as healthy as possible before getting pregnant and set up a good support network so you can get enough rest and good food throughout the pregnancy and the first 2 years when sleep deprivation can run you down and suppress your immune system.

I've used Absorb Plus (an elemental diet shake) with flax or Udo's oil throughout pregnancy and breastfeeding and I also give it to my 2 year old son Oscar whenever he asks for a milkshake (and his friends). It is an excellent source of high quality, all-natural nutrition and is absorbed very quickly - so even if your system is not functioning well, you'll still absorb the nutrients.

Regarding keeping things in remission, you need to address all the facets of your self - mind/body/spirit and heal all levels/aspects of your self. Dis-ease is not just a physical phenomena and this is the crux of the Healing Journey - healing, balancing and also integrating all the needs and woundings within yourself. The physical body is very important and it's needs must be met, but so are the emotional and spiritual bodies. When we can achieve health in all areas of our Selves, then it's lasting, I believe. On a purely physical level, ongoing probiotic supplementation has been shown to keep people in remission.

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Question:

I just have a very quick query: I cannot get N-Acetyl Glucosamine anywhere in Australia, not even through a naturopath however there is a company that makes a product called Intestamine which contains L-glutamine and N-Acetyl D-glucosamine. Do you think the N-acetyl D-glucosamine is okay? From what I have found on the net it seems that a lot of products contain the D-version and are used to treat intestinal disorders. I wonder what your research has brought up? I have ordered the Herb pharm version and got it sent to my mum who I am going to see in December and can pick it up then although it is a bit of a long wait. I wondered whether the Intestamine product may be a useful substitute? Also, one thing that really gets my goat, so to speak, is that I was and am reasonably healthy - I always watched what I ate, eating lots and lots of vegetables and fruit and of course from time to time getting a take-away but hardly regularly and then I got colitis. Have you, in your extensive research, come across studies or research to suggest any cause for colitis or IBD? Many thanks.
- Hilary T., Melbourne, Australia

Answer:

Sorry to take a while to get back to you but I wanted to make sure I had the answer before replying. Hence, I've talked to a couple of research heads at 2 of the major manufacturers in North America and the answer is: They're exactly the same; N-Acetyl D-Glucosamine is actually the correct pharmacological name for what is usually called N-Acetyl Glucosamine (NAG). So yes, go ahead and get the Intestamine product - L-glutamine and NAG work really well when combined together. However, if you start getting constipated, you'll have to reduce the dosage (L-glutamine firms up stool by causing water to be re-absorbed from the colon). NAG on it's own will not cause any constipation. Alternatively, you can order just NAG on its own (without the L-glutamine) from The Holistic Health Shoppe (listed in the back of the book) as they do ship worldwide.

Regarding causes for Colitis, you may want to look at your antibiotic use and gut flora (Leaky Gut Syndrome). If antibiotics (even as little as one course) are not followed by probiotics they can seriously disrupt the gut flora and consequently the health of the gut. There's one antibiotic that even warns in the package insert that it "causes Ulcerative Colitis" - and yet doctors don't warn patients and continue to prescribe it! Go figure. Also, emotional factors are key in any gut disorder and the brain/emotions and gut are closely linked - did you know that 60% of the body's neurotransmitters are in the gut - not the brain? So always explore and seek to heal emotional roots/woundings - for some people this provides more relief than physical therapies. Good therapies for this are EFT, craniosacral, hypnotherapy and energy/spiritual healing (but make sure the therapist has a good reputation). Anyway, hope that gives you some ideas...

* * * *

Question:

Thank you so much for letting me know about Absorb Plus - I have Crohn's and lately it's been the only thing I can tolerate!! What I'm wondering is: Is it a total meal replacement?
- Melinda S., Dallas, USA

Answer:

If you add an adequate amount of flax or Udo's oil to the Absorb Plus shakes (2 tsp. - 1 tbsp. per shake, or more) then yes, it is a total meal replacement as it will contain protein, fat, carbohydrates and a complete spectrum of major and trace minerals and vitamins. Oh yes, and a specific blend of beneficial free-form amino acids as well. See the website for details on how these specifically support your health: www.absorbplus.com. However, you do need to add the flax or Udo's oil - otherwise there's no fat in Absorb Plus, and a well-balanced meal will always contain 'good' fat which is crucial to body functioning and health.

* * * *

Question:

Thank you, thank you, found your book on the web several weeks ago, ordered it right away and felt like I read a story very similar to my own. 10 years ago diagnosed with the unease (love that word) U.C. Did the medical thing for several years, figured out that that was not going to help me. So started my own research which led me to quite a few of the same conclusions and treatments that you have. Nutrition, herbs, scientific diet 1 year with the same conclusion, ND's etc. You have been more successful and thorough in your methods and thank you so much for putting them in writing. Recently I am having quite a few symptoms and after talking to a gastro MD he scared me with colon cancer and the higher risk of it. I had some precancerous polyps removed a year ago. You don't mention anything about this subject and I am curious what your thoughts are on this subject. Your book has given me some needed encouragement and quite a few new ideas.
- Jon B., Los Angeles, USA

Answer:

Good question about the polyps.....I haven't done any scientific research on prevalence, incidence, etc. I had numerous polyps removed myself during my first (and only!) colonoscopy 17 yrs. ago. I guess my personal opinion is one based on a holistic view of health: Cancer is not some independent marauder that attacks unwitting victims. It is a culmination of years of ill health (both physical, environmental and emotional/spiritual) - just like any other systemic disease really. Polyps, ulcers, fissures, inflammation, bleeding, etc. are all results of an unbalanced intestinal environment - the severity of the unbalance determines the severity of the symptoms. You can focus on symptoms and address them individually or in certain groups, or, you can focus on whole-body. Integrated health and the healing of specific symptoms will be an automatic by-product of the return to balance and health of your WHOLE body.

If you're worried about polyps, or if your intuition tells you this is something you need to address, then I can give you a couple of ideas: First, check out Ozone Therapy (do an internet keyword search), a very popular, natural therapy administered by MDs in Germany for over 10 years, which is VERY effective in healing UC (and related intestinal symptoms). You basically receive ozone enemas (I believe 8-10 is the normal course of treatment). This therapy is also very effective with colon cancer with high cure rates - chemotherapy not needed.

The second thing is that if you're having colonoscopies, you need to follow each one with a specific program of intestinal healing and bacteria re-colonization: George's aloe vera, MucosaHeal, and full-spectrum probiotics for at least 3 months - Natren is my favorite probiotic manufacturer, get either their Trenev capsules or the 3 strains (*bulgaricus*, *bifidus*, *acidophilus*) in powder form that you can mix with water, whichever you prefer. But if you're having four or more bowel movements per day, you need to use the powders.

The third thing you may be interested in is my second book, THE IBD REMISSION DIET. This book basically expands on the elemental diet outlined in Ch.3 of LTYG and makes it very easy to follow a step-by-step program of completely liquid, elemental diet combined with a specific supplementation plan to heal the mucosal lining, restore the immune system and basically provide an intensive healing spa for the whole body (cells, hormones/glands, organs, etc. all facets of health are supported simultaneously). This is then followed by systematic food re-introduction (to test thoroughly for food intolerances/allergies) and probiotic supplementation to re-colonize the gut flora with good bacteria. Anyway, the result is truly a holistic healing program that takes your body (and colon) to the next level of health and so is a marvelous preventative for any future imbalance (including cancer).

Anyway, hope that answers your question. So I guess the short answer to the polyps would be: I don't worry about them, I just focus on taking care of myself holistically. I also avoid pretty much all medical interventions and testing/exploratory procedures as I feel the damage done to the intestinal tissue and gut flora (and overall health) far outweighs any 'knowledge' benefits. If something is wrong in my digestive system, I'll know about it just through my health (energy, bloodwork, Bio-Terrain Analysis - blood, urine, saliva comparative- mentioned in LTYG, and through specific digestive symptoms - gas, diarrhea, constipation, mucus in stool, cramping, bleeding, etc., or the absence thereof). I'm not even convinced that polyps (in isolation) precede or are indicative of eventual cancer, actually.

* * * *

Question:

Thanks for writing that book! I am 25 years old. In 1999 Morbus my Crohn (MC) has been diagnosed. It was a shock as I didn't know the disease. And nobody else I knew had that disease. In the meantime I know 3 people with MC and I recommended your book to all three of them (it seems to spread). Fortunately, my disease is not as bad as it could be. I never needed to go to a hospital so far. First I took 'Budenofalk', a medication with cortisone and it helped really good. But I only needed to take it for 8 weeks, after that I took 'Pentasa' for a year, but didn't like to swallow pills all the time. After that I didn't take any pills at all. But I was not healed completely. I had every day bellyache

and cramps and diarrhea. Not nice and always fear to do long walks etc. After reading your book I was shocked about the recommendations, what I need to change. But I just tried the easiest ones, and it worked quite good!!

- not to drink with meals, but I drink 2 litres of room temperature spring water a day
- try to avoid non-organic food (I used to drink Coke light every day, and after stopping that I felt better)
- reduce wheat (in Germany we have a lot of dark bread and I try to eat that more often)
- reduce tomato (but I love tomatoes...)
- reduce alcohol (but I drink a glass of wine every weekend with the food - and it is ok)
- stop drinking coffee (when I drink coffee, I have aches the whole day, can't drink coffee at all)

And now I have cramps and not formed stool only one or two times a week. That is alright, I think. I feel quite healthy. But I eat not enough fruits and vitamins as I have often problems with fruits - I think that is not really good. In fact, a lot of colleagues often catch a flu and I am only infected once a year on average. So I think my immune system is quite good. What I want to try next is a homeopathic therapy. On Monday I will travel to the Dominican Republic and hope that I can eat everything and can stand the alcohol (I think I will have more wine as usual, as we will eat in a restaurant each evening..). What I am interested in is how your pregnancy was, as I was told that it can be very complicated for MC women to have a normal and easy pregnancy. I want to have children, but I am a bit afraid if I can care enough for them, when I have a Crohn's attack, as I know that I need a lot of time for myself. And maybe I am not able to do everything what I want, sometimes not the easiest things as I am afraid of going somewhere where no toilets are. (I know that it can be quite hard as I had such attacks in 1999 and 2000, where I needed to take pills...) Btw I have no weight problems, I am happy with my body shape and I even try sometimes to lose some pounds. Ok, I think I wrote enough about me, but it is good to know that there are other people with similar problems and how they cope with it. Thanks again!

- Jana S., Hamburg, Germany

Answer:

Having kids is definitely harder for anyone with a weakened body since most babies result in a lot of sleep deprivation - which runs down your immune system and can result in you getting sick. However, if you can set up a good support network for yourself with family and/or friends who can take care of the baby while you sleep, cook meals for you to make sure you get good nutrition, etc. it can certainly be done! Or, just hire someone who can cook and/or look after the baby as needed so you can make sure you're able to look after yourself. Personally, I don't think it's possible to have babies/toddlers without a support system of some sort in place - without getting ill again. So I definitely recommend you set something up if you get pregnant that will start the minute the baby's born and carry on for at least 2 years. The Absorb Plus product I formulated is also good

for pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding mothers as its a quick easy source of excellent nutrition and immune support - I drank it during both my pregnancies and breastfeeding. Anyway, whatever you decide, I wish you all the best!

* * * *

Question:

Thank you for writing "Listen to your Gut". It has been an inspiration to me throughout my healing from Crohn's disease. I was diagnosed on Feb. 14th of this year. I had gone in for a hernia operation and they discovered a mass in my abdomen. It was determined to be Crohn's disease. My intestines were so screwed up that they had to do resection surgery the following day. After the surgery, the doctors said I could eat "anything I wanted" as long as it didn't hurt. That didn't sound too good to me so I sort of tried to watch what I ate. Three months later (to the day) I had a flare-up and had to be readmitted to the hospital. During one of the nights of my two and a half day stay, I looked up at the I.V. stand containing the steroid and antibiotic bags and down at the food cart at my pork and jello dinner and determined that the medical establishment doesn't know a whole lot about preventative care. So when I got home I got on the internet and found your book. I read it and immediately eliminated many foods from my diet and started on the recommended supplements (fish oil capsules, L-Glutamine, grape seed extract, Source of Life vitamins, George's roadrunner aloe vera juice etc.). For the next several months I was in good shape. Recently though, I have had problems with heartburn and have had to take Prevacid and now Aciphex (twice a day). I could use more information about how to fight the heartburn in a natural way. Otherwise, I'm doing really well. A recent trip to the G.I. doctor showed no signs of the disease. So far so good. Thank you again and help me out with the heavy-duty heartburn if you can.
- Tim J., Georgia, USA

Answer:

Congratulations on taking charge of your body and doing so well! Regarding the heartburn, are you following ALL the instructions in Listen To Your Gut, including the craniosacral therapy (or a good osteopath can also treat your esophageal valve)? The only other thing that's shown good results is to take some Natren brand *Acidophilus* powder (Megadophilus) before bed (or whenever you're getting the bad heartburn - 3 times/day if necessary), on an empty stomach if possible. Don't take the capsules, it needs to be the powder mixed in water. Follow directions on the jar. Natren probiotics are the best and only sold in the refrigerator at health or organic grocery stores (www.natren.com). Studies have shown good results with heartburn using just the *Acidophilus* bacteria, however I also mix it with Natren's Digesta-Lac (*Bulgaricus* bacteria) and Bifido Factor (*Bifidum* bacteria) powders and find the mix works well with the heartburn I'm getting now that I'm 7 months pregnant! So, if you can afford it, definitely use all 3 as it will also benefit your bowels immensely as well. Well, give those a try and let me know how it works for you..... I know a woman who discontinued her heartburn medication after just 2 sessions of craniosacral therapy - just try to find a practitioner with a good reputation and good referrals - any therapy is only as good as the individual practitioner.

* * * *

Question:

I recently ordered Listen To Your Gut from your company and finished reading it. It is a wonderful book. I have a question for the author Jini Patel Thompson and was wondering if you could get me in touch with her by e-mail or any other way that may be convenient for her. In the book she mentions that she takes Vitamins B12 and Folic Acid in liquid form. I have looked extensively and have not found liquid Folic Acid. Would Jini be able to tell me how and where I can find it? I would greatly appreciate an answer. Thank you.

- A. Ahmed, Conneticut, USA

Answer:

I'm glad you enjoyed the book! I phoned the pharmacy where I originally got the liquid B12/folic acid and apparently they don't have it any more. However, equally effective and easy to absorb is a sublingual (put it under the tongue and let it dissolve naturally). See Appendix C for suppliers. If you need a higher amount of folic acid you can supplement separately - its the B12 that's important in liquid/sublingual form, as it's the one people can have trouble absorbing.

* * * *

Question:

I'd like to know why Jini Patel Thompson doesn't recommend utilizing Soy more often...as in Soy Milk, Soy Protein Shakes, etc....especially in the special diets.... since it seems to be so gentle on the gut?

- Cindy H., Boston, USA

Answer:

I didn't recommend soy in the book due to the high estrogen content and because I didn't find it very well tolerated myself - but couldn't pinpoint why. Well, since then, more research and info has become available and there are many reasons I wouldn't recommend processed soy products (like soy milk, soy protein, tofu, etc.): Soy is not a complete protein (lacks cysteine and methionine) and therefore is not an ideal protein source, soy contains high phytic acid levels which block mineral absorption (such as iron, magnesium, calcium, zinc), soy depresses thyroid function, it contains many toxins and high amounts of digestive enzyme inhibitors; it blocks the function of the pancreatic enzyme trypsin, in particular. For an excellent article that really describes all the above in detail and why/how, order a back issue of Alternative Medicine Magazine (May 2001 - The article is 'Soy: Con' by Tim O'Shea). Their website is:

<http://www.alternativemedicine.com/>

Two respected naturopaths I discussed this with also feel that soy is like dairy in that it is mucus-producing as well. Not surprisingly, 60% of people allergic to dairy are also allergic to soy. Fermented soy products such as soy sauce, tamari, miso, etc. are much better as the fermentation process makes them easier to digest. Personally, I've found the best alternative milk to be rice milk (Rice Dream brand) since you can get it as

certified organic. My second choice would be almond milk (but not thickened with carrageenan). Health-wise goat milk is great, but many don't like the taste.

* * * *

Question:

Thanks God, I have not had any flare up in the last 3 years and I am completely drug free (with no more secondary effects). I am very grateful to people like you who have had a proactive attitude and courage to write a book to help others from your experience dealing with this physically and psychologically devastating disease. In a sense I am a lot like you. Once I was diagnosed with Crohn's I started reading about it. I bought several books on the net, I read them, I drew conclusions and I started implementing them. I also took my time to find a doctor specialized in digestive diseases to have a similar mindset and all I can tell you right now is that I know I am doing all my best to have this disease under control. Well, at least what I do to prevent flare ups gives me a sense of controlling my health, even though everybody knows that we do not control our lives. Anyway, I can tell you what works for me, so maybe you can share it with other people and it can be of help for them as well.

As soon as I wake up I drink a glass of aloe vera mixed with spring water. For breakfast I always follow the same ritual, I rotate brown rice, cooked oats, cooked millet with cooked apple, I always mix it with linseed oil, and I really think this is a real therapeutical breakfast. For lunch, I like to rotate vegetables, always steamed, grilled or boiled with either brown rice and legumes (lentils, or garbanzo beans) or with blue fish (for the omega 3, either salmon, tuna, mackerel, sardines, etc). For dinner I always eat different vegetables than for lunch, either alone or with white fish. Once a week I also eat a boiled egg. I must say that oils, always cold pressed oils have been the key formula for me. My intestines are happy with lots of oil. Linseed oil, olive oil, primrose oil and sometimes fish oil. Thanks God to oil!!!! Besides the apples I have for breakfast I do not eat more fruit, I have not tried much but the times I tried to eat them I have the feeling they come back and for a long time, and I concluded that it is hard for me to digest sucrose, I have the feeling that makes my digestion slower. And of course, I drink tons of spring water between meals and I exercise 1-hour everyday. I also need 8 and a half hours of sleep (my intestines like to rest) Funny, eh?

I must say that even though diet has definitely played an important role in remaining well, my mindset has also played an outstanding role in maintaining wellness. I learn to think differently and react differently to given situations that in the past stressed me a lot. But this is a long story. It has been hard work but it is worth it. All I can say is that I am starting to reap what I started sowing a couple of years ago. I think mind and body are seriously connected. Well, I could talk for days on this topic but it is not the appropriate time to do so.

I would really appreciate if you could give me some feedback as well on dining out. Professionally I must travel twice a year with some colleagues and my boss and I always eat grilled vegetables with fish. Even though I have not had any problem, my stomach gets bloated and returns to normal after a good nights sleep and some linseed oil and aloe vera. Any advice??? Could you share with me what could also be good for me? Is it because of the salt they use? Your comments are welcome. Concerning fruits, can you

give me any advice? I do not eat dairy and gluten products since I am allergic to both of them. What do you think it would be good for me to add in my diet? I would also add that there is hope for people with IBD. You and I among others can live active and healthy lives besides having IBD. Thanks God for that.

- Alicia F., Barcelona, Spain

Answer:

Have you tried the following fruits: Very ripe bananas - if you can eat them black, that's the best - also Papaya, Mango, Cantaloupe and Watermelon? Remember to eat fruit in isolation - i.e. don't mix with other food/drinks. Also, don't mix the different fruits together; just try one at a time. You may indeed have a problem digesting sucrose (table sugar), but fruit contains fructose, which is an instantly absorbed monosaccharide sugar. Also, have you tried goat's milk and/or goat's cheese as you may be able to tolerate that (it's closest to human breast milk)? Otherwise, your diet sounds fantastic - good for you! For eating out, instead of ordering your vegetables grilled - which often uses a lot of oil at high temperatures therefore resulting in deformed fatty acids, order them steamed and the fish too. Then you can ask for some virgin olive oil on the side, and you can drizzle the amount you like over them along with salt, for flavor. You could also ask them to season the vegetables and fish with basil, which is a very safe herb (and any other herbs you like and tolerate well). Why do you only eat an egg once a week? If you can tolerate it, feel free to eat them more as the body needs lots of protein to fight disease and repair damaged tissue, etc.

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Question:

Part of my Crohn's problem involves an abdominal fistula following my last operation. At the end of last year it was a big problem. This year I had infliximab treatment, which was initially a great success. The fistula never actually completely dried up but almost did. Now several months later it seems to be becoming a bit more active. Do you have any advice specifically for fistulas? I also bought a copy of the book you mentioned about Glutamine, and have been taking that. I think it is effective but it is difficult to know how much to take. Any advice gratefully received.

- Kenneth T., Northampton, UK

Answer:

If you use a combination of all the herbal therapies under *Fistulas* in the LISTEN TO YOUR GUT book, you should be able to heal a severe fistula in (I would estimate) 8 months to 2 years. For a milder fistula, anywhere from 4 months on would be my guess. Although, I suspect you may also need to wean off any prescription drugs (as these damage vital organs needed to support your healing process and interfere with your immune system) to really see results. As for the L-Glutamine, take as much as you can tolerate (up to when it constipates you) on an empty stomach - it is MUCH more effective when taken on an empty stomach, as many times a day as you can. Same advice for the N-Acetyl Glucosamine (NAG). Alternatively, for a faster route to healing, you could try THE IBD REMISSION DIET. By going on a completely liquid, elemental diet - combined with the supplementation plan, including L-Glutamine - this is the fastest way to provide

your intestine with a rest from the digestive process so your wounds (like fistulas) can heal uninterrupted. Using this method (along with instruction in LISTEN TO YOUR GUT) you can heal a fistula in anywhere from 2 to 6 months.

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Question:

I found your book very helpful and I appreciated the style in which it was presented, i.e. here are some ideas that have worked for other people, try them out, etc. The added information on why certain ideas might work was very much appreciated. I feel I now have a better understanding of how Crohn's affects the body and why & how certain ideas work.

I've certainly found that L-Glutamine is a great help during and after flare-ups. I am very fortunate that my Crohn's was diagnosed early on and the anti-inflammatory pills I am taking (Pentasa) have kept the effects to acceptable levels with occasional flare ups (normally eased by lots of L-Glutamine, rest and stress avoidance!). I firmly believe that stress plays a major role in flare-ups. Stress avoidance will not cure Crohn's but I know from personal experience that my condition is worse during stressful periods at work and is always better during holidays. Comes back to the principle of looking after the body and mind as a whole.

I am very interested in your Absorb Plus formula as my main battle is with tiredness and weight maintenance. The cliché I'm afraid - eat lots to regain weight and restore energy but eating lots brings on a flare up, weight loss and a reduction in energy levels! Please send me a sample and details where and how I can purchase the formula in future.
- Russell E., Exeter, UK

Answer:

It sounds like you've got a good understanding of your disease cycle and triggers and I'm glad the L-Glutamine is also working well for you. Try adding MucosaHeal and George's Aloe Vera Juice and you may be able to get off prescription drugs (Pentasa) completely. The Absorb Plus will definitely help you gain weight and strength (and adding flax or Udo's oil to the shakes as directed will further control and heal inflammation) and improve your overall health. Please visit their website as it's a great source of information on why each of the ingredients is so beneficial. You can also order the product online or by phone - all is on the website. If you ask, they should send you a sample: <http://www.absorbplus.com>

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Question:

My Dad received an email from you thanking him for buying your book and he forwarded it on to me, as I had asked him to get it for me. I am not exaggerating when I say that your book has changed my life! I was diagnosed with Crohn's 15 years ago when I was 12. Typically I have experienced at least one decent flare-up every year since then, often requiring hospitalisation. Even between flare-ups my health was never great and I have

never had a medication-free time of more than a month or so (which always led to another flare-up). Last October I wound up in hospital again, and again the doctors had no answers and wanted to operate. Thankfully my doctor does listen to what I want and gave me one more chance. I finally made the decision that it was up to me; I obviously couldn't put my health in the hand of others any more. So, I hopped on the Internet, found your book and got Dad to get it for me.

I have found the advice with the diet great - much of it stuff I sort of knew from experience but it was great to see it set out so clearly. I haven't had any dairy (or very little - I still love a bit of feta every now and then) for nearly a year now, have a shot of aloe vera every morning and a few of the other supplements that you recommend. Most exciting is the fact that I am on the lowest dose of steroids that I have been on in 15 years and am still feeling great! And I have been feeling great for nearly 12 months! Congratulations on the birth of your baby boy. The fact that you had a great pregnancy (and fell pregnant so soon after being so ill) and now have a healthy baby gives me a lot of inspiration. I would like to have a baby in the next couple of years, which is one of the reasons I was so inspired to finally take matters into my own hands and get off the medication and take control of my Crohn's. But I worry that all the years of medications and being ill will make it hard for me to get pregnant, and if I do get pregnant that I may get ill.... Too much time worrying, I know. But, it would be great if you could do a book on getting pregnant and having a healthy pregnancy...Thanks again, Hope you are well,
- Jennifer R., Melbourne, Australia

Answer:

I'm so glad to hear you're doing well. If you keep making improvements (read the book again and you'll probably find some other therapies to add to what you're already doing that will help you) I see no reason why you can't get off steroids altogether - just keep pressing on!

It's funny you should mention the stuff about getting pregnant, as in my next book called THE IBD REMISSION DIET, I caution people that the program is such a great fertility booster to watch out if they don't want to get pregnant! Anyway, sounds like you'd really benefit from this next book and it should enable you to get off the steroids hopefully for good. All the best and also re-read the section in LTYG about craniosacral therapy as that may bring you a new level of healing – EFT and hypnotherapy are also great. I've addressed most of the concerns of Pregnancy and IBD in Ch. 9 of the new, revised Listen To Your Gut – if you have the old version, then be sure and get the new one. It's double the size, with a CD of implementation tools, and it's now a complete program!

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A former journalist, Jini Patel Thompson is an internationally recognized expert on natural healing for colitis, Crohn's, diverticulitis and IBS. Her books have sold in over 40 countries. She has appeared repeatedly on radio and TV shows giving hope to those suffering from gastrointestinal disease. Jini is a popular speaker at natural health-related conferences, and her health articles have been published in magazines and journals in the U.S, Australia and the U.K., and on the Internet worldwide.

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