

IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME, COLITIS AND CROHN'S DISEASE



Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), colitis and Crohn's disease are all functional bowel disorders characterized by abdominal pain and changes in bowel habits. While IBS is usually not associated with any finding on medical clinical testing, colitis and Crohn's usually are.

The symptoms from which patients suffer may include some combination of:

- 1) abdominal pain
- 2) altered bowel function
- 3) colonic mucus hypersecretion
- 4) symptoms of dyspepsia (anorexia, nausea, flatus)
- 5) varying degrees of anxiety or depression.

They are grouped together here due to the fact that they all affect the same organ of the body, the bowels, they have many similarities as described above, and the way we care for patients with these conditions is very similar.

It is of utmost importance that food allergies be evaluated and that aggravating foods be kept out of the diet. Wheat and dairy products are very common culprits. Dietary supplements may include acidophilus, omega-3 fatty acids and aloe vera distillate. Herbs that have been found to be effective in soothing symptoms include chamomile, meadowsweet and slippery elm. As with all herbs, they should be used under the supervision of your health care practitioner.

As stress is a very common factor, it is important to find the causes of stress, eliminate them if possible, or at least find some effective stress relieving techniques.

And last but not least, it is essential to ensure proper nerve flow to the bowels through a very thorough chiropractic evaluation. Nerve interference caused by subluxations can interfere with the normal function of the bowels - or any other body part - and needs to be corrected through chiropractic adjustments.

In March 2003, a controlled study published in the *Journal of Vertebral Subluxation Research* evaluated the effects of chiropractic adjustments on allergy and Crohn's disease patients. Of the 17 patients who received spinal adjustments, 12 showed long-term and stable remission of their symptoms. The authors also found that vertebral subluxation is a common and characteristic finding in patients with allergies and Crohn's disease. They postulated that *"this nerve compression leads to a chronic functional disorder having a significant effect on digestion, absorption of nutrients and liquids, conveyance of food as well as various other functions of the digestive tract extending to excretion."* For more details and more studies log on to www.icpa4kids.org/research/chiropractic/colitis.htm.

Please do not hesitate to call if you need more information, or to schedule a personal consultation.

Please watch for our next column in two weeks.

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Disclaimer: The above represents the opinion of the authors, based on extensive research and years of clinical practice. It is not intended for self-diagnosis and treatment. Please consult a health care professional as your specific condition might require different recommendations.