

Newsletter

Gastroparesis Is Often Curable

Gastroparesis is a symptom that patients with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and other digestive problems are sometimes given as a diagnosis. Like irritable bowel syndrome, it generally sounds more important and impressive than it really is.

The word gastroparesis often gives people the impression that their stomach is paralyzed and that there is nothing that they can do to solve their problem. Fortunately, this is often not the case, certainly not in the same way that someone with a serious spinal cord injury may suffer from paralysis.

The diagnosis of gastroparesis simply means that there is a delay in how long it takes the stomach to empty. It is then typically assumed that this is due to damage to the vagus nerve, which helps control the emptying time of the stomach. In some cases this damage is actually seen or verified. But in many cases is only an assumption of nerve damage based solely on the delayed emptying time of the stomach.

What should be remembered is that a delay in gastric emptying time is a symptom with several potential causes and is not necessarily due to damage to the vagus nerve. Constipation and diarrhea are also symptoms with multiple causes. The fact that one represents a delay in bowel transit time (constipation) and the other represents an expedited transit time (diarrhea) does not mean that there is permanent damage to the nervous system, or even any damage at all to the nervous system.

These symptoms of gastroparesis, diarrhea, and constipation simply mean that the digestive tract isn't working properly. In the case of gastroparesis, unless you have a confirmed diagnosis of damage to the vagus nerve, it is very possible that something else is causing it and that you can resolve it.

Gastroparesis is frequently associated with diabetes, and sometimes people assume that if they have diabetes then they must have nerve damage and thus gastroparesis. However, there is still a strong possibility that there is another cause of their gastroparesis and that it can be resolved, even in the presence of diabetes. This is also true for people who suffer from GERD, heartburn, irritable bowel syndrome, constipation, or other digestive problems.

Patients at the IBS Treatment Center often report that they have been diagnosed with gastroparesis, and those patients often get much better after discovering the true cause of their problem. In fact, studies in the medical literature have demonstrated the same thing. If you suffer from gastroparesis, don't give up. There may be a solution for you!

[Dr. Wangen's Blog](#)

*Don't forget that Dr. Wangen's Blog has weekly (or more frequent) postings and allows you to share your comments. Check it out at:
<http://www.ibstreatmentcenter.blogspot.com>

[IHF-Wiki](#)

*Looking for a restaurant? Have a great allergen-free recipe to share? All this and more at the IHF-Wiki – a program of the Innate Health Foundation.
<http://www.InnateHealthFoundation.org/wiki/>

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Coconut Bliss: Frozen Dessert for those with common allergies

Coconut Bliss is a frozen dessert based on coconut milk. Patients have raved about Coconut Bliss to Dr. Wangen so often that at a recent dinner party it was trotted out for a mass tasting. We all tried 2 flavors, Dark Chocolate and Mint Galactica. Here is what the tasters said: "Incredibly smooth and rich – smoother than ice cream"; "The Dark Chocolate has a great flavor – the coconut is nice and there is no grittiness or aftertaste"; "This is really good"; "The Mint Galactica flavor is great, really refreshing"; and "Wow". Although Coconut Bliss is expensive, it is an excellent option for anyone avoiding dairy, soy (except flavors with chocolate flakes), eggs, sugar (except flavors with chocolate flakes), and other common allergens. The company behind Coconut Bliss is working hard to source their ingredients organically and through certified Fair Trade suppliers. They are also working on a soy and sugar free supplier for their chocolate flakes. The Dark Chocolate has no soy or sugar. Available locally at Whole Foods. Online at <http://www.coconutbliss.com/>

Asking for Your Health Insurance Experience

Sometimes we get information about how patients were reimbursed but we want to learn more to help you get better reimbursement. Send us your EOB forms! If you have submitted a claim to your insurance company we would like to know what happened. If you were denied, please email us and let us know which insurance company and what plan you are on. If you got an 'Explanation of Benefits' form (or two or three) it would be great if you could send us a copy of all the pages. You can scan and email your documents to us at info@ibstreatmentcenter.com, fax to 206-749-4100, or you can send them by snail mail to 1229 Madison St. Suite 1220 Seattle WA 98104. Participation in this effort is entirely voluntary. We won't share your personal information with anyone without your specific written consent. We will use what you provide to identify ways we can help maximize reimbursement. We may share aggregate information or individual cases stripped of personally identifiable information with others or even in this newsletter. Obviously we will not share names, phone numbers, social security numbers, or the like with anyone without your specific written consent. Information that we have received has indicated that some patients are receiving full reimbursement for their testing and visit costs, as provided for in their insurance contract. But some patients are not getting as much as they expect or deserve. By sending us your EOB forms or letting us know you were denied, we can hopefully help you get better reimbursement and help future patients know what to expect and how to best get reimbursed.

April 2008 Events Calendar

-King5 Healthy Living Expo

April 19th and 20th at the Qwest Field Exhibition Center

Hours: 10:30 AM to 5 PM Saturday and Sunday Free-Open to the public.

-The Healthy Living Expo is on again. Attend the King5 Healthy Living Expo and bring the whole family for free health screenings, activities, and demonstrations. Dr. Wangen will be speaking on "Solving Digesting Problems at the IBS Treatment Center" on the demo stage Saturday at 3PM. The IBS Treatment Center will be holding a drawing for a free treatment package. Just drop by and enter to win!

-IBS & Gluten Intolerance Support Group Meetings Special Date Special Guest!

Special Date-The next meeting will be on **MONDAY** May 5th, 2008 from 6:30 to 7:45 at the IBS Treatment Center.

Special Guest - Angela Pifer MS Certified Nutritionist will be joining us for it. Ms. Pifer owns and operates The Nourished Body, <http://www.thenourishedbody.com> and provides Clinical Nutrition, Dietary Management, and Nutritional Counseling and Education. She will be hosting an informal Question and Answer forum. We encourage you to send us your questions ahead of time. Please email your questions to info@ibstreatmentcenter.com. Questions will be forwarded to Ms. Pifer so she can address them at the support group meeting. A selection of the questions, along with her answers, will be printed in the next newsletter. Send in your questions for Angela today!

***Special notice:** The 'July' Meeting will also be on a Monday – Monday June 30th. Our Special Guest will be Anna Sobaski of Breads from Anna!



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