

# IBS Treatment Center Newsletter

1229 Madison Street, Suite 1220, Seattle, Washington 98104 (206) 264-1111 [www.IBSTreatmentCenter.com](http://www.IBSTreatmentCenter.com)

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*I began having bloating (severe) in my late teens. As time went on, the bloating became more intense and for longer periods of time. I also began having chronic ear infections. My family practitioner would prescribe me an antibiotic and while on it, and several weeks after, I would have extreme diarrhea. While all of this was happening, my family doctor did blood work finding I was becoming more and more anemic and having low protein and calcium in my blood. Finally after having various tests and sonograms, I was diagnosed with IBS. However, I just kept getting worse and worse. I was extremely tired all the time and did not have enough energy to work all day.*

*Finally after trying to do some research on our own, my parents and I found the IBS Treatment Center and ordered Dr. Wangen's book. We decided to make an appointment and within two weeks, we traveled across the country to talk with him. Three weeks later I was diagnosed with celiac disease along with many other food allergies. Now, only a few months later, my energy is much, much better and I don't feel sick all of the time.*

**Jill O.**

## How IBS Can Cause Iron Deficiency and Anemia

Many patients who have digestive problems are also anemic due to low iron or low vitamin B12 levels. This problem causes fatigue, so it should be of interest to many people. Being anemic and having IBS is not unusual and there is a logical reason for it. First we'll discuss anemia and then how it relates to IBS and digestive problems.

### What is anemia?

Anemia is a common blood disorder that is a decrease in the number of red blood cells (RBCs) and/or poorly formed red blood cells. These are the cells in your blood that carry oxygen. If you are anemic, then you will be tired because you are not delivering as much oxygen to your body as someone who is not anemic.

There are many different types of anemia, but the most common are due to iron deficiency or vitamin B12 deficiency. Iron deficiency anemia will show up on your complete blood count (CBC) as a low RBC count, low hematocrit (Htc), and/or low hemoglobin (Hgb). Vitamin B12 deficiency anemia typically shows up as an increase in the size of the red blood cells. On your CBC it is noted as the MCV.

### How to catch low iron before you become anemic

Iron is stored in the body in a protein form called ferritin. Ferritin levels can be measured with a simple blood test. Ferritin decreases long before iron

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deficiency anemia is apparent on a complete blood count. Therefore you can often prevent iron deficiency anemia by monitoring your ferritin level.

It can take several months of iron supplementation to rebuild iron stores. If you are anemic and you take iron only long enough to correct the anemia, you likely have not built up your iron stores enough to last for very long. Then you are much more likely to become anemic again in the near future, which of course will cause you to be tired. This is another good reason to check your ferritin level.

### **What is borderline anemia?**

It is not unusual for people to report that they have been told that they are borderline anemic. In most cases, they were not told to take iron. What you should know is that borderline anemia is not a technical term. You either are anemic or you are not anemic. If you have been told that you are borderline anemic, then you are probably anemic.

Correcting this problem will help you to feel much better. If you are borderline anemic and it is due to an iron deficiency, then your iron stores will be very low. So have your ferritin checked.

### **What about vitamin B12?**

If your anemia is due to a B12 deficiency, then taking B12 will solve your problem. Your doctor may prescribe B12 injections, which will improve the treatment and vastly increase the amount of B12 getting into your body. Vitamin B12 is also stored in the body, but its stores are unfortunately not so easy to measure.

### **What does this have to do with IBS?**

The important question underlying anemia is "Why do you have low iron or B12 levels?" The answer may be that you don't absorb them well. People with IBS and related digestive problems often have a problem absorbing nutrients. This is particularly obvious with diarrhea, which is clearly a malabsorption issue.

However, constipation can also the same problem absorbing nutrients can also happen with constipation.

This is why many people with IBS also suffer from chronic anemia. They are not absorbing the iron and/or vitamin B12 that is in their food. Their digestive problem can lead to other problems such as anemia. Correcting the IBS allows the digestive tract to heal and will result in a much better absorption of these nutrients. It will also result in a much better absorption of other nutrients that are not so commonly measured.

The end result is that you not only solve your digestive problems, you also solve your anemia. And ultimately you are much healthier and happier.

### **I Want Your Input for My Next Book**



**New Deadline! Dr. Wangen  
must receive your input  
and/or stories by March 4, 2007!  
Hurry and send yours today!**

I have begun writing my next book, "Understanding Celiac Disease and Other Forms of Gluten Intolerance: How To Tell if Wheat is Making You Sick."

In order to help prevent other people from having to go through the same thing, I'd like to share your story as well as get your input on what you would like to see in this book. For example:

*-What kinds of questions would you like answered?*

*-What issues or concepts have been important to your understanding of gluten intolerance?*

*-What still confuses you?*

*-What did your doctor forget or neglect to tell you?*

*-What have you learned that you would like to share with others?*

Would you like to share the entire story of your adventure suffering from gluten

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intolerance, finally getting diagnosed (whether by a doctor or yourself) and starting to feel better? If so, please send it to me. It can be anonymous (I'll change the name) or we can use your first name.

Please send your suggestions and stories to [info@ibstreatmentcenter.com](mailto:info@ibstreatmentcenter.com). I will send a free autographed copy of the book to you if I use your story.

This book will focus on understanding and diagnosing all forms of gluten intolerance, including celiac disease, non-celiac gluten intolerance, gluten allergies, and wheat allergies.

If all goes well, the book should be out sometime this summer. I'll be sure to let you know.

Thank you for your help. I greatly appreciate it and so will thousands of others.

**Dr. Stephen Wangen**

## **Calendar:**

### **March 6th: GIG and IBS Support Group**



Our chapter of the Gluten Intolerance Group is meeting on a new night! Along with the IBS Support Group, GIG will meet on the **first Tuesday of each month at the IBS Treatment Center.** [Click here for details.](#)

Come to our support group and get the latest on Gluten Intolerance and IBS! Make friends who know what you've been through and share what you've learned too!

Most meetings attended by Dr. Stephen Wangen, founder of the IBS Treatment Center and author of *The Irritable Bowel Syndrome Solution*.

### **King 5 Healthy Living Expo**

Qwest Field Event Center, Seattle, WA  
Mar 17 - 18, 2007 (10am-5pm)

Come visit the IBS Treatment Center's Booth and enter to win testing and treatment at the Center! The Expo promises lots of information on all kinds of health topics!

## **Seattle's Gluten-Free Food Festival with International GF Beers**

March 17, 2007 from 3 pm to 7 pm  
Bell Harbor International Conference  
Center located at Pier 66, Seattle

Event tickets: \$30/Adult; \$20 for kids 12  
and under

Enjoy a Gourmet Gluten-Free Menu that includes new twists on old favorites: pizza, Ruben wraps featuring La Tortilla GF Teff tortillas, etc...

A drink bar will feature international GF beers and local microbrewers. A special drink bar for kids will offer juice and sodas.

Event includes raffles, GF dessert auction, exhibits, lots of friends and more. Local regular microbrew beers will also be available.

*Proceeds from this event are used for patient education and to support programs of the Gluten Intolerance Group of North America®.*

### **GIG needs your HELP!**

GIG needs your help to make this the biggest and best food festival in Seattle for those on a gluten-free diet.

Help from home:

- ✓ Donate special gluten-free desserts for the Dessert Auction
- ✓ Collect other auction items. Let's see if we can have a special auction just for kids.
- ✓ Send us the names and contact information of the GF-friendly restaurants and places to shop in your area

Help on the committee:

- ✓ Most business of the committee can be done by phone or email...we need help coordinating the event activities

Help at the event:

- ✓ Sell raffle tickets
- ✓ Help with the auction, games and other activities
- ✓ Be a host/hostess

Please contact Nancy or Cynthia at the GIG office: 253-833-6655 or email: [gig@gluten.net](mailto:gig@gluten.net)

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**Third Annual  
Celiac Disease Awareness Walk**

Saturday, May 19, 2007

Registration at 8am, walk begins at 9am

Food Fair from 9am to noon

Green Lake Park Community Center

7201 E. Green Lake Drive North, Seattle

- Sample Gluten free products
- Learn more about Celiac Disease and dermatitis herpetiformis
- Help raise funds for Celiac Disease education, advocacy, research and support groups!

\$25 Suggested donation includes t-shirt and food fair admission, \$10 for kids 10 years and younger, \$5 for food fair only

*For more information, visit*

*[www.gluten.net](http://www.gluten.net), call 253-833-6655 or*

*email [info@gluten.net](mailto:info@gluten.net)*



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