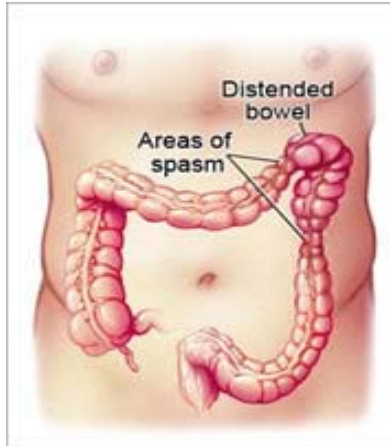


~ Ask Granny Earth ~

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Irritable Bowel Syndrome

ASK GRANNY EARTH

I have recently met several people who were seeking advice/help with their IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome). The most frequently asked question was:

DOES ANYONE KNOW WHAT CAUSES IBS AND HOW TO CURE IT?

Medical definition of IBS: A common disorder of the intestines.

Symptoms: pain, gassiness, bloating, constipation/diarrhea, or both.

Cause: **Unknown**, maybe due to emotional conflict/stress, certain medicines or food.

Diagnosis: A stool sample will be tested for blood. Your doctor may also include diagnostic procedures such as x-rays (ouch) or endoscopy (viewing the colon through a flexible tube inserted through the anus- ooooooh!) to rule out disease.

Cure: **None**

Treatment: There is no standard way of treating IBS. Some doctors prescribe fiber supplements, laxatives, drugs to control colon muscle spasms, drugs that slow digestive process, tranquilizers, or antidepressants.

However, research is mounting to show that the condition preceding IBS is actually 'leaky gut syndrome'. Well, this one is pretty self-explanatory. The gut is leaking. Gut is just a slang word for intestine, or digestive tract. The colon, or large intestine is about 6 feet long and connects the small intestine with the rectum and anus. Its major function is to absorb water and salts from digestive products that enter from the small intestine. This material remains there until most of the fluid and salts are absorbed into the body. The stool then passes through the colon by a pattern of movements, where it is stored until a bowel movement occurs. Our bodies are designed to keep the bowel in the gut.

What, you might ask can cause a leaky gut? Dr. Zoltan Rona (Toronto, Canada) says that many things can cause it: Antibiotics, alcohol and caffeine, chemicals in processed food, NSAIDS, such as ibuprofen, prescription corticosteroids (prednisone), a high refined carbohydrate diet, prescription hormones, mold and fungal mycotoxins and parasites such as Giardia lamblia, Helicobacter pylori, Pseudomonas and others. These parasites, or as the medical profession likes to call them, 'microbes' and their toxins (a nice word for their waste products) can overwhelm the liver's ability to detoxify. This causes confusion, memory loss- headache when exposed to environmental toxins.

Amoebic parasites: Single celled, microscopic organism found in water, on fruits and vegetables, in soil and damp environments. It survives outside 'ideal environments' (the gut) by forming a cyst, which remains viable for long periods of time. Ingestion of the cyst of the ameba (there are many species) causes diarrhea, constipation, abdominal pain, gas, weight loss, and chronic fatigue. Corticosteroids and other drug therapy often provoke the infection, as does stress. Inside the body, the ameba erode the tissue (of the gut) by releasing a protolytic enzyme, which creates small ulcers and causes dysentery. The ameba enters the bloodstream through these ulcers or lesions, and can eventually reach other organs. The most common extra intestinal infection site is the liver. Abscesses may also occur in the skin, lungs or brain. Ameba feed upon starches and the carrier may manifest 'cravings' for a high carbohydrate diet. The cyst of the ameba gets into the host (us) in drinking water, food, flies, cock roaches and by people with unclean hands.

So now we can consider a possible cause of IBS as parasites, but now what? There are many herbs that are well known for getting rid of these creatures that live within us. A few are: Sage, Wormwood and Black Walnut. Next week I will give a description of these herbs and their medicinal uses.