The nutritional know
Our experts chew over the tough questions

Bacterial balance
The benefits of probiotics

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MEDIA PLANET

August 2012

DIGESTIVE WELLNESS

LIGHTS, CAMERA, TAKE ACTION!

Actress and advocate **Emmanuelle Chriqui** puts the spotlight on colon cancer.

"We don't realize the damage done each day. We must do a better job taking care of ourselves."
Sharon Osbourne raises money to promote colon cancer awareness for those in need.

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More than **60 million Americans** confront digestive health issues in their day-to-day lives.

The 'insides' scoop

Most Americans have experienced unwanted digestive symptoms, such as heartburn, indigestion, nausea, gas, constipation, diarrhea, or bloating. Acid reflux or GERD, chronic constipation, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), hemorrhoids, gallstones, and abdominal pain related to diverticular disease are among the most common gastrointestinal problems that prompt visits to the doctor. The good news is that these problems can be alleviated in most patients, restoring normal function and health. Your doctor can help you learn how to control these symptoms.

More dangerous digestive conditions, such as hepatitis, ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease, impact the health and quality of life of millions of Americans. Even better news is that safe and effective treatments that can control symptoms are available and researchers are closing in on understanding the causes which may lead to cures.

Testing as treatment

The best news is that colorectal cancer—the second leading cause of cancer deaths—is highly preventable. The American College of Gastroenterology (ACG) wants you to get screened for this potentially deadly disease, and recommends colonoscopy as the preferred strategy for colorectal cancer detection and prevention.

Gastroenterologists know that colonoscopy is one of the most powerful preventive screening tests because we can see and remove pre-cancerous growths in the colon called polyps, stopping colorectal cancer before it starts.

A recent study in The New England Journal of Medicine proves that when polyps are removed during colonoscopy, deaths from colorectal cancer are reduced by 53 percent.

ACG guidelines recommend colonoscopy every 10 years beginning at age 50, and beginning at age 45 for African Americans. If you have a family history of colon cancer–or even colon polyps– you may be at higher risk of getting the disease. Colon cancer is one of the most preventable and curable types of cancer when detected early. Since the risk of colon cancer increases with age, getting screened in mid-life is essential. Improved techniques for cleaning out the colon and sedating patients make colonoscopy easier now than ever.

"If you have symptoms or need screening, don't let embarrassment or fear keep you from getting the answers you need. See your doctor!"

Lawrence R. Schiller, MD, FACG
President, The American College of Gastroenterology 2011-2012, Dallas Texas

Speak up for the silent majority

Digestive diseases are a fact of life for millions of Americans. If you have symptoms or need screening, don't let embarrassment or fear keep you from getting the answers you need. See your doctor! America's gastroenterologists are on the front lines in diagnosing and treating digestive disorders and can help you stay happy and healthy for years to come.

Learn more: Visit the ACG's new patient website for a wealth of online resources, health tools, and expert insight: http://patients.gi.org/

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WE RECOMMEND

Web sensation
Patients with IBD log on and link up for a common cure

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"If you look at twenty or fifty thousand patients, you have so much more information that can be accrued. It is all really about the power in numbers."

MEDIA PLANET

DIGESTIVE WELLNESS,
5TH EDITION, AUGUST 2012

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Distributed within:
The Washington Post, August 2012
This section was created by Mediaplanet and did not involve the news or editorial departments of The Washington Post.

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INSPIRATION

Emmanuel Chriqui shows her competitive edge to help raise awareness for colon health.

TIP 1 GET INFORMED AND GET SCREENED!

Live to love: Screen for life

Question: How did actress Emmanuel Chriqui raise awareness for colon health?

Answer: By going head-to-head with 'NSYNC's Lance Bass in a contest to see who could generate the most money for charity.

Actress Emmanuel Chriqui is using her celebrity status to raise awareness of a topic once taboo —colon health.

"Once upon a time, we didn't talk about the colon," said Chriqui, a Canadian-born star perhaps best known for her portrayal of Sloan on HBO's Entourage and now appearing in The Mentalist.

Colon cancer hit close to home for Chriqui – her mom died from the disease when she was 16; sadly her dad is now battling the same disease.

When presented with the opportunity to do something, Chriqui considered it "divine intervention" and something she could do to honor her mom's memory. "I want to do whatever I can to raise awareness of colon health and screenings."

That led her to The Power- of-2, an online fundraising competition against Lance Bass to see who could raise the most for charity. Chriqui's fans pushed her to the top, pledging more than $11,000 to Colon Cancer Canada. In addition to the funds raised, she got to "walk" Bass dressed in a Poo Fu the dog costume through Los Angeles' Runyon Canyon.

Chriqui, although only 35, has been screened because of family history. She urged people to know their own family health history, get screened and eat healthy. "I've made it my mission to take the shame out of getting tested. Preparation isn't pleasant, but when you wake up you are done and to me it is better to be safe than sorry,"

Diet is crucial to colon health, she said. "Drink tons of water, eat more fresh fruits and vegetables and examine the size of portions. Remember, your colon is where food goes and gets stored."

Chriqui hopes to have the opportunity to further share her passion as an advocate for colon health. "Know your body. Look for changes – the truth is colon cancer is preventable."

FAYE BROOKMAN

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KNOW YOUR BODY. Chriqui hopes to have the opportunity to further share her passion as an advocate for colon health. PHOTO: CLAUDETTE BARIOS/HBO

QUESTION & ANSWER

Dominique E. Howard, MD
Board Certified Gastroenterologist with Capital Digestive Care

Dispelling colon cancer myths

Gastroenterologist Dominique E. Howard sheds light on two of the most common misconceptions on colon cancer prevention.

I'm too young to need colon cancer screening.

Certain circumstances may put you at risk earlier than you think. Colonoscopy screening beginning at age 50 remains the preferred colorectal screening strategy by The American College of Gastroenterology. However, certain individuals and groups of individuals may need to begin screening earlier. Those with a family history of colon polyps or colorectal cancer, a personal history of inflammatory bowel disease, as well as African Americans are at an increased risk and should talk to their doctor about an appropriate age to begin screening.

I don't have any symptoms, so I can't have colon cancer.

This is a common misconception. During the precursor polyp stage and even in early colon cancer there can be few, if any, symptoms. In later stages of colon cancer symptoms such as stool changes, rectal bleeding, abdominal pain, anemia, and unexplained weight loss can develop. If you do experience these symptoms you may need to have a colonoscopy regardless of age and should consult your physician.

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SPOTLIGHT

HEALTH CONSCIOUS. Osbourne recognizes the importance of maintaining a proper diet.
PHOTO: SHARON OSBOURNE MANAGEMENT

Osbourne goes with her gut

Sharon Osbourne admits she was never concerned about colon health until she battled cancer in 2002. "I had never even heard of colon cancer," explains the talk show personality and one-time reality TV star. "I had no idea what the doctors were talking about."

Today, Osbourne feels healthy and strong. But that didn't used to be the case. "There was always an excuse. I was working too hard, or I ate something bad. You have to listen to your body. It's trying to tell you something is wrong."

Osbourne underwent surgery and chemotherapy, which took its toll, even with in-home assistance. After seeing patients waiting at bus stops just to get to their chemo treatments, the busy wife and mother began raising money and promoting colon cancer awareness to help those in need. "People don't discuss the colon because they think it's embarrassing. But it's the second biggest cancer, affecting men and women equally."

Osbourne recognizes the importance of maintaining a proper diet for colon health. "I was a fast food junkie. I ate all the wrong things, like milkshakes, ice cream and butter. I mean, this one colon has to deal with all the rubbish we put in our bodies. We don't realize the damage done each day. We must do a better job taking care of ourselves."

CINDY RILEY

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TIP 2 FORTIFY YOUR FOODS!

PHOTO: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

The power of probiotics

Sometimes, bacteria can actually be a good thing – especially for gut health.

"Healthy gut flora—or the good bacteria that live in our stomach and intestines—is critical to our wellbeing, simply because these beneficial organisms directly impact our digestive and immune systems," said Daniel Kim, chief concept officer and founder of Red Mango Yogurt and Smoothies.

Despite actions we take, such as frequent hand washing, there's still a risk of digestive disorders caused when the balance of friendly bacteria in the intestines is disturbed (CDC statistics show more people actually die of a bacterium called Clostridium difficile than drunk driving accidents). Research suggests introducing beneficial organisms in the form of probiotics may help.

Edible innovations

"Every single person should take a probiotic daily," said Mike Bush, vice president of business development for Ganeden Biotech, Inc., the developer of GanedenBC30, a natural probiotic used in foods such as yogurt, coffee, tea, pizza, muffins and even chocolate.

Consumers are learning about probiotics from innovative food products extolling the health benefits at a time when we are more interested in healthy living and eating than ever. "Consumer awareness of probiotics is as high as ever, and year after year, it continues to rise," said Kim.

Not all probiotics are created equally

Some lose efficacy when added to products or in the manufacturing process. Others don't come with clinically-documented health benefits, while some don't have proper levels to eradicate gut issues. Another obstacle is limited shelf life. "Many simply die in our digestive tracts," said Kim.

Experts suggest making sure the foods selected for probiotic benefits meet the scientific criteria for the term—namely, products that contain an adequate dose of live microbes that have been documented in target-host studies to result in gut health. Ultimately, with the ever-growing availability of probiotics in such a wide variety of foods, it seems that the culinary world has finally perfected the recipe for flavorful fare with a functional finish.

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TIPS

Glen Gibson
Professor of Food Microbiology, Food and Nutritional Sciences, University of Reading

Tips from a probiotic pioneer

With so many companies touting probiotic and prebiotic benefits, it is easy to get confused. To cut through the clutter, Glenn Gibson, professor of Food Microbiology at the University of Reading in the United Kingdom, a well-respected expert in probiotics offers the following tips.

- **Take consistently!** To experience optimum health benefits from probiotics these should be taken on a continual basis.
- **Take after antibiotics.** After treatment with antibiotics, you might wish to replenish the friendly bacteria in the gut flora by taking probiotics.
- **Study the ingredients!** Look for bifidobacteria or lactobacilli as the probiotics.
- **Know the dosage.** The higher the dose, the better—but it should contain at least 10 million probiotic cells.
- **Consider the delivery form.** Drinks are fine if you like the taste and can be part of a meal. If you want to keep the product for a long time, then dried forms are better (e.g. pills, capsules).

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FACTS

Mark Noar, MD
Director,
Endoscopic Micro-surgery Associates
Towson, MD

The word on GERD

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is very common—up to 30 percent of the population are sufferers, many having symptoms two or more times a week. Reflux occurs when the valve at the top of the stomach malfunctions and allows stomach contents into the esophagus. Stomach contents contain acid, bile and digestive enzymes that irritate the lining of the esophagus, causing pain and discomfort, and may lead to serious conditions.

Treatment options:

- Depending upon the symptoms and severity, diet and lifestyle modifications may vary.
- Medications are the most common prescribed therapy. Recently, prolonged use of these drugs has raised significant concern due to serious side effects.
- Non Surgical—Stretta Therapy—Stretta remodels the valve using radio frequency energy and restores normal function.
- Surgical—Implants, Endoscopic Fundoplication—Surgical options tighten the valve by implanting a barrier or wrapping the stomach around the esophagus.
- See your Gastroenterologist for advice on appropriate treatment.

TIP 3

LISTEN TO YOUR BODY—AND YOUR DOCTOR!

CONNECTING FOR A CURE

Patients helping patients

It's not often that a patient can contribute to advances in his or her own care, but thanks to CCFA Partners—a ground breaking internet-based cohort study—patients with inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD) can play an active role in helping researchers find cures.

By using the internet, the program can rapidly and efficiently collect information from IBD patients across the country in order to learn about the impact of IBD on their health and quality of life. The registry focuses on the health of IBD patients, their diet, prevention activities and current treatment. By focusing on reports directly from patients, this initiative will be an important addition to other clinical research projects that have relied mainly on reports from physicians.

Dr. Lloyd Mayer, a gastroenterologist and immunologist based at Mt. Sinai Medical Center in NYC explains the value of the large database that Partners enables: "If you look at twenty or fifty thousand patients, you have so much more information that can be accrued. It is all really about the power in numbers." Since the program's launch last year, there are almost 12,000 patients reenrolled in the study.

For more information or to enroll, visit www.ccfapartners.org. Patients must be 18 years or older and all of the information is confidential.

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PANEL OF EXPERTS

	Jeannie Gazzaniga-Moloo, PhD Registered dietitian and spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics	**Dr. Douglas Howard** Founder and formulator of Balance of Nature, and worldwide lecturer on phyto-nutrition and medicine	**Joseph C. Maroon, MD, FACS** Chairman of GNC's Medical Advisor Board, neurosurgeon, health and fitness expert and Ironman triathlete
Question 1: What is the best thing readers can do to take control of their digestive wellness?	**One sure way** to improve your digestive health is to eat enough fiber-rich foods. Foods such as fruits, vegetables, lentils, beans and whole grains are going to provide your digestive system with the bulk and some of the fluid it needs to keep it running smoothly. Every day try to eat 2½ cups of vegetables, 2 cups of fruit, ½ cup of beans or lentils, and 3 ounces of whole grains.	**Get rid of the crap** (and I mean that literally) and then keep a clean house—Stool is toxic; this is why the body is getting rid of it. The longer it sits in the bowel, the more it can irritate the cells in the colon. Fiber is essential in your diet. The proper fiber can reduce cholesterol, help balance blood sugar, promote weight loss, and even reduce your risk of many cancers as it moves things along - lubricating and cleaning as it goes. Pay attention to the simple S^3 rule: things are working when there is less Stick, less Stink, and less Streak.	**Your digestive health** primarily depends on what you eat. Unfortunately, a 2012 survey showed only 25 percent of Americans actually eat a healthy diet. Properly functioning digestion prevents deficiencies of minerals, vitamins and other nutrients that helps our body remain healthy. Avoid inflammatory foods, like saturated fats found in red meats and Trans fats from processed foods. Eat five servings of fiber-filled fruits and vegetables daily. Drink water instead of soda. Incorporate healthy bacteria (probiotics) into your diet to boost your digestive track's immune function.
Question 2: What is the most common misconception about digestive health?	**People often think** their digestive upset is due to a food allergy. This often leads to anxiety over food selection or eliminating specific foods all together, further upsetting digestive health. Before eliminating foods because you think you may have a food allergy that is causing your digestive upset, consult with a physician for proper diagnosis and treatment and a registered dietitian for guidance on selecting a balanced diet.	**Most people believe** diverticulosis is an uncommon and serious problem. Actually, the majority of Americans over age 60 have diverticulosis. Diverticulosis is a condition in which little sacs or out-pouchings develop in the wall of the colon. These sacs alone do not pose any threat to an individual. If the bowel is not kept clean and healthy "diverticulitis" may develop. These sacs become inflamed, and/or infected possibly leading to bleeding or perforation of the colon.	**The surface area of** the gastrointestinal track is 200 times greater than the surface of skin. Like the skin, the digestive track protects the body from the outside world. Intestines are on the frontline of defense to allow healthy nutrients in and block otherwise toxic molecules.

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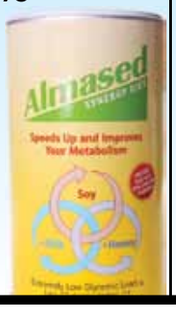

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