

New book from the AGA helps patients achieve greater freedom from IBS

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A new book from the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA) offers patients with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) a variety of strategies to lessen the burden that IBS puts on their everyday lives. IBS is a common disorder of the intestines that leads to crampy pain, gassiness, bloating and changes in bowel habits; there is no cure. The new book, "Master Your IBS," includes a variety of strategies to help patients learn how to manage their IBS symptoms and achieve greater freedom from IBS.

"The authors very nicely integrated patient stories, medical information and management approaches to help [patients](#) understand more about [irritable bowel syndrome](#) and provide ways to relieve their symptoms," said Lin Chang, MD, AGAF, of the UCLA Division of Digestive Diseases. "The book will likely empower irritable bowel syndrome patients by helping them learn how to more optimally manage their symptoms."

"Master Your IBS" offers a week-by-week approach that gives patients time to understand the information, master the strategies and incorporate them into their lives. The self-management handbook shows patients how to reduce the severity and frequency of IBS symptoms without special diets, drugs or equipment. Instead, simple skill-building exercises are recommended to help patients focus on awareness of diet and trigger foods, relaxation techniques, and proper sleeping and healthy thought patterns to help them better understand their IBS.

"This is a wonderful self-help book that physicians will want to recommend to all of their irritable bowel syndrome patients. It includes how-to instructions for most of the [behavior therapy](#) strategies that research has shown to be effective for irritable bowel syndrome," said William E. Whitehead, PhD, of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The tools offered in this book are based on a long-term research study at the University of Washington developed by nurses and educators. Readers will follow in the footsteps of hundreds of study participants who succeeded at controlling their diarrhea, constipation and pain — without special diets, drugs or equipment.

"This book was developed in response to frustration that many individuals with irritable bowel syndrome feel about their current management strategies," said Margaret Heitkemper, RN, PhD, FAAN, one of the authors of the book. "We hope this book will allow patients to individualize the content to their lives and symptoms."

What have study participants said about their lives after the program?

- "I'm amazed that I have almost no IBS symptoms. It is so much easier to deal with life when I feel well."
- "I still have IBS, but it is no longer the center of my life."
- "Abdominal breathing is the most useful strategy I have in managing my IBS."

More information: www.masteryouribs.com/

Provided by American Gastroenterological Association

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