

IBS, Crohn's, Colitis, and other Digestive Disorders

Digestive diseases are common, disruptive, and frustratingly difficult for conventional medicine to treat effectively. In addition to common digestive ailments brought on by viruses, stress, or diet, each day millions of Americans suffer from irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), Crohn's disease, or ulcerative colitis. These are serious concerns that need to be addressed, but conventional medications often bring a world of unwanted side effects, too.

Fortunately, there is a botanical ingredient that stops the painful inflammation that marks these conditions, and it does so without side effects. This herbal wonder is the focus of this *Terry Talks Nutrition*®.

Boswellia – Nature's Gift to Us

One of the gifts given to Jesus by the Three Kings was frankincense, and it remains a gift to all humanity. Frankincense is the aromatic gum resin that comes from African and Asian trees from the species boswellia. True frankincense comes from *Boswellia carteri*, which is found in Somalia and parts of Saudi Arabia, but the term is also used for the gum resins of other boswellia species, including *Boswellia serrata*.

Boswellia serrata is naturally found in the dry hilly areas of India, and has been used in Ayurvedic medicine for thousands of years. In fact, much of our current knowledge of the healing properties of boswellia originates in India. Research and further clinical studies have substantiated the traditional use of this botanical to treat various conditions, including asthma, arthritis, intestinal/bowel disease, ulcers, bronchitis and many skin disorders.

The strong interest in boswellic acids from the plant comes from clinical research into their anti-inflammatory actions. One of the reasons boswellia is so valuable is the way it fights inflammation. Prescription and over-the-counter non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) fight inflammation by seriously impeding the COX-1 and COX-2 inflammatory cascades, which can cause a whole host of dangerous side effects. These side effects include erosion of the stomach

lining, gastrointestinal bleeding and ulcers, and a reduction in kidney function which *double* the risk of heart attack and stroke!

Boswellia works on the 5-LOX cascade, which creates an increase in leukotrienes and results in specific types of inflammation. 5-LOX is the culprit behind chronic gut inflammation, not the COX-1 and 2 cascade. That is why boswellia is extremely effective for irritable/inflammatory bowel, Crohn's and other intestinal issues, where inflammation drugs fail. Other botanicals may reduce *oxidative* stress and damage, and in turn, reduce inflammation. They work well, but aren't as direct as boswellia, or another of my top botanical recommendations, curcumin (which operates in *all* kinds of inflammation).

Most specifically, boswellic *acids* are the compounds responsible for the botanical's effects. The most active of the boswellic acids is known as AKBA (Acetyl-11-keto-B-boswellic acids).

AKBA, a very important boswellic acid that is strongly anti-inflammatory, can have levels as low as 1% in unstandardized boswellia products. To make sure you get the best, look for boswellia standardized to at least 10% naturally occurring AKBA. Also, researchers found that one of the boswellic acids, called "beta boswellic acid," is actually PRO-inflammatory – clearly the last thing you want when dealing with inflammatory bowel disease.

The best products are purified and this beta boswellic acid is filtered out to less than 5% of the extract. Unstandardized products can have as much as 25%, so it's important to know what to look for.

So what does this have to do with digestion? Quite a bit. Virtually every chronic disease has two things in common: inflammation and oxidation. In the case of most digestive disorders, inflammation is the main problem, and causes the symptoms so familiar to those who deal with them.

For example, microscopic inflammation through the small bowel and colon may be another

To your good health,
Terry... Naturally




TERRY'S BOTTOM LINE:

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), Crohn's Disease, ulcerative colitis, and other digestive disorders can be very difficult to treat conventionally. Prescription medicines can cause side effects that make the "cure" almost as bad as the disease.

I recommend a specialized boswellia extract that inhibits 5-LOX and helps stop the inflammation-caused symptoms of IBS, Crohn's, and other concerns. This amazing botanical:

- *Stops bloating and pain*
- *Relieves diarrhea and urgency*
- *Provides soothing relief and regularity*
- *Stops bloody diarrhea and intestinal damage*
- *Equals effectiveness of drugs without side effects*

Here is the formula I suggest:

Proprietary Complex 650 mg
Containing Boswellia (*Boswellia serrata*)
Gum Resin Extract standardized to contain
>70% Total Organic and Boswellic Acids
with AKBA >10%, with less than 5%
beta-boswellic acids, Curcumin (*Curcuma
longa*) Rhizome Extract, turmeric essential
oils, in a medium chain triglyceride (cold
pressed organic virgin coconut oil) complex

physical cause – and certainly an effect – of IBS. The already inflamed tissue causes the

More...

body to release inflammatory mediators that affect the enteric nerves, and change the way the digestive system reacts to what would otherwise be normal operating procedure. In other words, the inflammation of the gut sends a signal to the brain telling it that something is wrong. The digestive system reacts (or overreacts) by shifting into high gear, in the case of diarrhea, or slowing peristalsis dramatically, in the case of constipation.

As digestive disorders go, IBS is one of the most frustrating conditions. Unfortunately, it is also one of the most commonly diagnosed. It's estimated that 1 in 5 Americans have IBS. Of those individuals, at least 50% are referred to a gastroenterologist after reporting symptoms to their primary care doctor. These symptoms range from cramping, bloating and general digestive discomfort to diarrhea and alternating constipation. Many people who suffer from IBS can't predict when it will occur, so travel plans – and sometimes daily life – can be difficult at best. In the worst cases, individuals need to know at all times where the nearest restroom is located.

Aside from IBS, there are other digestive conditions that cause a great amount of distress for millions of people. One of them is Crohn's Disease. Found in over 2 million Americans between the ages of 15 and 40, it can recur after the age of 50. Crohn's Disease can permeate the intestinal tract and cause fever, pain, bloody diarrhea, and loss of appetite.

Another digestive concern, ulcerative colitis, is an inflammation of the colon that can destroy patches of the mucosal lining of the colon or rectum. Aside from pain, symptoms also include bloody diarrhea and stools that contain mucus or pus.

A major issue with these conditions is an impairment of the ability to absorb nutrients and deliver them to the bloodstream, possibly causing malnutrition. This can result in a deficiency of several major nutrients and cause anemia and weight loss. Drugs and surgery have been the standard treatment, particularly for colitis. Unfortunately, these drugs have major side effects, while boswellia has virtually none.

In fact, in a recent study conducted in Germany and Austria, participants with Crohn's disease were treated with either boswellia or the drug mesalazine (a drug commonly used to treat Crohn's, ulcerative colitis, and IBS). The results of the study definitely favored boswellia. The authors concluded that boswellia performed as well as the drug, but *without* the dangerous side effects. In fact, considering safety and efficacy, boswellia showed a much better benefit-to-risk ratio than the drug.

In a clinical study of individuals with colitis, (another condition requiring inhibition of 5-LOX), patients were given boswellia extract or the prescription drug sulfasalazine. The results for boswellia were very positive. Of the 20 patients treated with boswellia, 18 showed an improvement in one or more of the diagnostic parameters, including stool properties and mineral excretion. A follow-up study showed similar results, again positive for boswellia. The authors concluded that boswellia could be an effective treatment because of this – and the lack of side effects.

Scientific research has also shown boswellia can help with IBS. To stop the inflammation and other symptoms of IBS and other digestive problems, I have often recommended boswellia with a high-absorption curcumin extract. Curcumin also supports the intestines and digestive tract. It's an excellent herbal pain reliever and anti-inflammatory to have on board when you experience IBS or other digestive flare-ups. In recent studies, the inflammation inhibitory abilities of curcumin suggests that it may help stop microinflammation in the colon. This makes it an excellent partnering botanical to boswellia.

If you do use a combination, make sure you get the right curcumin extract. Look for one that is micronized and blended with turmeric essential oils for up to 10 times the absorption and blood retention at meaningful levels of standard curcumin extracts.

You Can Have a Regular Life!

If you have IBS, Crohn's, colitis, or other digestive disorders, there are also lifestyle tips that can help. First, consider keeping a food

journal to note each instance of symptoms. You're likely to see some patterns in food or behavior that add up to digestive discomfort and stress.

- Avoid caffeine and alcohol. Sodas, coffee and tea can make your emotions feel "revved up" and begin the spiral of emotional reactions that can lead to IBS symptoms. Alcohol, considered to have a calming influence, can actually cause inflammation in the digestive tract.
- Avoid wheat (and other grains), refined sugar, and dairy products. Any one of these, or a combination of them, can cause physical reactions that make IBS and other digestive disruptions more likely. There is some relationship between people with Celiac disease, who cannot digest gluten, (and have to avoid wheat, rye, barley) and symptoms of IBS.
- Try to find effective ways of dealing with stress. If you can, get regular exercise. Even a walk around the block at lunchtime or during a break can make you feel much more grounded. If anxiety seems insurmountable, please consider discussing it with a professional who can help you work through tough situations more productively. Not only will it lessen symptoms, but you'll be able to live a fuller, more vibrant life.

Consider the amazing power of the specialized boswellia extract I've discussed here – whether alone or in combination with high-absorption curcumin – plus these lifestyle changes. I am certain that you will have a better, more balanced, and vibrant healthy life. TM

When in doubt, always consult your physician or health care practitioner. This column is to provide you with information to maintain your health.

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