

With The Help Of A Natural Healer, I Finally Found Relief

Ever since I can remember, I've envied people who could eat anything. Fast food, heavily processed foods, barbecued ribs with vegetables drenched in cheese —nothing seems to bother the cast-iron stomach crowd. Meanwhile, I'm easily recognizable by the plate of crisp veggies or the bowl of pasta sans tomato sauce, with just a drizzle of olive oil and parmesan cheese. Every meal starts with a prayer to the food gods that I won't lose my meal before I can enjoy it. With the exception of the last four months of my life, I have always been besieged by diarrhea.

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It started when I was 12 years old. Whenever I ate meat, my body reacted with one of two extremes: usually, it took days to digest, leaving me in agony until I could finally move my bowels, or I had instant diarrhea. My parents took me to a pediatrician, who diagnosed me with two opposite problems: a [duodenal ulcer](#) and insufficient levels of [hydrochloric acid](#). In other words, I had an ulcer but not enough acid to digest food.

The doctor prescribed an acid blocker, which I took three times a day. But even at 12, I knew it didn't make sense to treat the symptoms without knowing the culprit. Against my doctor's and parents' wishes, I stopped taking the pills and began eliminating foods that bothered me, starting with meat. Reluctantly they let me do my own thing because I was beginning to feel better.

But then, in 2004, when I was 38, I had a flare-up that lasted two weeks. My food elimination tactic had sort of worked up until then, but invariably I'd eat something new or a food that had been on the safe list that sent me into intestinal distress. It eventually reached the point where I found myself in a gastroenterologist's office for a [sigmoidoscopy](#), an [endoscopy](#), and a colonoscopy. The tests yielded nothing except the comment, "You have one of the cleanest colons I've seen in a while." The doctor diagnosed me with idiopathic irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) by process of elimination, and once again, I was prescribed acid blockers. I threw out the prescription and lugged my gut back home.

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Simultaneously, I started experiencing frequent bouts of vertigo. My regular doctor referred me to a neurologist who diagnosed me with [vestibular migraines](#). She prescribed a beta-blocker and an antidepressant to counter one of the common side effects: depression.

Every appointment was becoming more of the same: doctors treating symptoms without addressing the causes. I wanted to figure out how to treat my gut naturally, once and for all. Moreover, I didn't want to take prescription medications to treat symptoms instead of focusing on the bigger issue at hand: healing my gut. At a loss for what to do, my husband and I decided to take a less conventional approach: We quit our corporate jobs, sold our house, and bought an organic farm in Puerto Rico.

The farm was amazing at first, and it seemed to be helping my gut. With an endless supply of fresh fruits, vegetables, dairy from goats, and eggs from poultry, I was finally experiencing some relief.

But eventually, the diarrhea returned. I felt defeated. How could I have gotten to a point where most of our food came directly from our organic farm only to realize I was *still* doing something wrong? I did some research and learned that [GERD was common in menopausal women](#), so I accepted this was my new normal *again*.

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It wasn't until earlier this year when I met a woman named Natalie that my gut health finally turned a corner. Like my husband and I, Natalie and her husband had moved to Puerto Rico from the States, and we found ourselves spending nearly every weekend together.

During one of our meals, Natalie observed me leave to use the restroom immediately after we started eating. Later, she mentioned that she too had been plagued with all sorts of issues, including inflammation in her gut. She went on a mission to heal herself using plant medicine, even starting a natural healing business called [Earth Roots Healing](#). She offered me a few gut health suggestions:

- **Eliminate seed oils (including olive oil).** They contain polyunsaturated fat, which causes inflammation.
- **Don't mix dairy and gluten.** Even without gluten intolerance, Natalie explained gluten and cheese combined create inflammation.
- **Eat your greens an hour after your meal.** “Rest the intestines, then consume the superfood greens.”
- **Take a B12 supplement.** Vegetarians are prone to B12 deficiency.
- **Filter your water.** Most city water in the U.S. and Puerto Rico contains pesticides, herbicides, chemical fertilizers, chlorine, [fluoride](#) and more. They're all known carcinogens that can cause diarrhea and headaches – among other health issues. ([Bottled water](#) isn't necessarily safe either.) Although Brita filters out lots of bacteria, it doesn't eliminate any of the above, but [Sawyer](#) does.
- **Consume stinging nettles in tea or capsule form.** Stinging nettles contain amino acids, vitamins A and B (including 12!), C and K, beta-carotene and more.

It's now been a few months since I implemented Natalie's recommended dietary changes. I haven't had diarrhea or a single headache since. I am also off my daily decongestant and my arthritic knees no longer hurt. I'm sharper, more focused, more productive and more confident than I've ever been in my life. My husband concurs and adds that I am also more beautiful than he's seen me in a decade.

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There are over [28,000 medicinal plants](#) to treat or cure both acute and chronic illnesses. Although [natural healers](#) predate modern medicine by thousands of years, Western medicine refers to them as “alternative medicine practitioners.” While prescriptions and modern medicine practices work for many people, I knew that I needed to take a different approach to help heal my gut. And I'm so glad that I did. Thanks to Natalie, I was finally able to gain optimum health.

Hippocrates, widely regarded as the father of medicine, once famously said, "First, do no harm." This became the renowned Hippocratic Oath. But few people know two of his lesser-known quotes about health and medicine. Hippocrates also said: "All disease begins in the gut." And then there is this one:

"Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food."

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