

## HEALTH

## Survey: One in three adults has multiple digestive problems

More than half (52 percent) of adult Americans had a digestive problem in the previous month, according to a major Gallup survey. Of those surveyed, a significant percentage, 33 percent, had four or more symptoms — including indigestion, heartburn, gas or belching.

Multiple gastrointestinal problems can be an indicator of a motility disorder. Motility refers to the movement of food through the digestive system. Problems with motility result in food sitting in the stomach or even moving back up.

Complications that can occur if food does not move properly through the system include slow stomach emptying, indigestion, heartburn, chronic belching, irritable bowel syndrome and constipation.

"Many people suffer digestive symptoms such as bloating after meals and excessive gassiness that are actually symptoms of a motility disorder," says Michael Palumbo, M.D., internal medicine specialist and assistant professor of medicine at New York University. "They should speak to their physicians, who can guide them in ways to avoid the symptoms entirely."

The most common complaints from those surveyed — gas, indigestion, belching, heartburn, and nighttime coughing due to heartburn — can be evidence of a motility disorder.

The top symptoms also include hoarseness, sour tasting fluid or swallowed food coming back in the mouth, nausea and difficulty in finishing meals because of early feelings of fullness.

### PROBLEM ONLY FOR THE OLD?

Among the more surprising findings of the survey was that younger people reported symptoms more than the 65+ age group. Fifty-five percent of people under 65 reported having a symptom of indigestion or heartburn while only 39 percent of people over 65 reported symptoms.

Also, there appeared to be no significant difference between males and females in reported symptoms.

Most people (83 percent) said they are more likely to experience these symptoms after mealtimes, suggesting a motility problem. As a result, a third of the symptomatic people said they have changed their eating

habits — eating smaller but more frequent meals, turning down dinner invitations to avoid food being served late at night, or eating at different times than the rest of their family.

Gastroenterologists recommend that people who have symptoms of a motility disorder talk to their doctors about prevention and treatment.

## Study finds link between ethnicity and foot ailments

Your attitude about feet and their care could very well depend on the ethnic group to which you belong, according to "Attitudes Toward Foot Care," a survey conducted for the American Podiatric Medical Association.

The survey showed white respondents took more prescription drugs for foot ailments than did minorities (35 percent to roughly 25 percent). Also, minorities said they tend to favor nonprescription products as foot remedies.

The survey also found that minority and white respondents tend to suffer foot ailments in different proportions. Minorities reported the highest incident of pain and discomfort, heavy foot

## Prescription for healthy skin

"Avoid the sun" is one important warning label on prescription drugs that you don't want to overlook. It means that a side effect of taking the medication is that you'll sunburn more easily or become photosensitive.

New York dermatologist Dr. Debra Wattenberg has seen patients who have had a seemingly "mysterious" sunburn that turned out to be a medication side effect. "One patient called saying she had developed

severely red itchy skin after spending just a few minutes outside. I asked her about any medications she was taking and, sure enough, she was on tetracycline, a commonly prescribed antibiotic that makes skin photosensitive." Ignoring the "shun the sun" warning can give you more than a severe sunburn: it can affect how well the medicine does its job. Acne treatments such as Retin-A can make skin burn easily, which interferes with the medication's ability to control acne.

"I tell people to forgo the sunbathing until they are finished with the treatment," Dr. Wattenberg says. "If they have to be outside, then they must wear protective clothing like a hat and long sleeves and absolutely use a sun block."

### Importance of Sun Block

The American Academy of Dermatology recommends

## Summertime is challenging for working parents

"Children ages 11 to 14 are too old to willingly go to a babysitter but too young to be on their own," said Dr. Lou Ann Todd Mock, a psychologist at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

When work obligations make it hard to supervise young teens, Mock suggests thinking creatively. The key is figuring out how to provide some sort of supervision without making it look like babysitting.

Mock suggests looking for organized programs, like science, art or sports camps, that address a child's areas of interest.

"Helping your child find his talent and develop it can make

wearing a sun block with an SPF of at least 15 when sunbathing, but it's estimated that 90 percent of sun exposure is received through incidental activities, not specifically sunbathing. Dr. Wattenberg has a tip for patients who may not like using a suntan lotion every day while on the medication.

"Many sun blocks are too heavy for some people to use on their face daily," she says, "so I recommend using a facial moisturizer with a sun block." Dry to normal skin that has heightened photosensitivity may need a fragrance-free product with a higher SPF. "Fragrance can irritate. It's also easier for men to wear a protective moisturizer without fancy perfumes."

The good news is that these photosensitive reactions are easy to avoid if you stay out of (See Sunburn, Page 13)

for easier summers," Mock said. "The kids who get in the most trouble are the one's who have no interests and too much time on their hands." Other activities that provide supervision include:

- Helping a relative or neighbor care for younger children.
- Working or volunteering as an assistant at church or day care programs.
- Visiting grandparents, aunts or uncles.

"It may be impossible to get the whole summer covered, but children can have activities that take up blocks of time during vacation," Mock said.

Parents should be prepared to let their child have some input in the summer decision-making process.

"At this age, parents can't just tell a child what they want them to do and expect it to happen," Mock said. "Be ready to negotiate and talk about the different possibilities."

When a child must stay at home, Mock encourages parents to arrange some type of calling system. She also recommends dropping by the house occasionally and having a neighbor keep an eye on the house if possible.

One battle not worth fighting is summer bedtimes.

"There is nothing wrong with sleeping late and staying up late. Kids need time to be kids," she said. "The problem arises when children don't get back on a routine before school starts."

Summer chores and responsibilities can help keep a child from getting too far away from the structure of school.

"The best way to survive the summer is to base decisions on your child's capacity to handle responsibility and freedom," Mock said.

## LEGACY'S RHYTHM & SOUL SERIES



Celebrate the Legacy of  
R & B during Black  
Music Month



**10% OFF**

ALL NON-ADVERTISED  
LEGACY'S RHYTHM & SOUL SERIES

11.99 CD 5.99 Cassette

# Odyssey

1600 Las Vegas Blvd. So. Open 24 hrs. 384-4040

## COLON and RECTAL SURGICAL ASSOCIATES

JOSEPH P. THORNTON, M.D., F.A.C.S.  
PROCTOLOGY

Surgery & Diseases of  
the Colon & Rectum

IS PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THE  
OPENING OF ANOTHER LOCATION:

**3150 N. Tenaya Way. Ste 270**

Serving the Northwest  
& Summerlin Areas

Also: 3006 S. Maryland Pkwy, Ste 470

**369-9941**

Se Habla Español  
Serving Las Vegas Since 1978