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**Coping With Crohn's Disease**

By "Sarah K. Jenkins"

Crohn's Disease may seem like an overwhelming challenge; however, it is not an insurmountable disorder. You can lead a fairly normal life although Crohn's is a part of it.

The first step in coping with Crohn's Disease is seeking treatment. While at first you may feel like you are overreacting or you may feel embarrassed, the truth is that you suffer from a medical condition. Like diabetes or cancer, medical care is necessary to reduce pain, lessen complications, and improve life in general. The doctor you see will explore your history, symptoms, and physical being, but you should feel comfortable knowing this necessary is to treat your condition. Medication will greatly improve your overall physical wellbeing and should be discussed with your doctor. In severe cases, surgery may be necessary.

While the physical body is an obvious area that needs attention, the human psyche may also require treatment in dealing with this chronic disease. Once you realize and accept this is a disease that will more than likely affect you for the rest of your life, you may become incredibly weighed down. You may become depressed, feel excessive anxiety, or experience a lot of tension. If symptoms are severe, you may need to speak to your doctor about your feelings as medication may be an option. You should also seek emotional assistance, such as support groups. There are also agencies that provide educational information that may prove to be a valuable resource. The most important aspect of this area of coping is that you acquire the help you need to manage the condition you have.

There are also other areas of Crohn's Disease that are not often discussed. Poor self-image, physical pain, and fear often hamper sufferers' sex lives. In addition, medication that is taken to treat the disorder also has negative side effects. If any of these issues occur, you should discuss your situation with your doctor to what may be done to improve the situation.

Also, there are small things you can do to make yourself more comfortable when you are around others or out in public. Knowing where restrooms are in public places, carrying a change of clothes, and being prepared for accidents or possibly embarrassing circumstances may reduce the impact of the occurrence of such. If you realize the possibility of something happening, you can mentally prepare yourself.

## Coping With Crohn's Disease

Taking these small measures will greatly improve your quality of life and allow you to live your life to the fullest.

Sarah is an acclaimed writer on medical matters, and has written extensively on the subjects of Attention Deficit Disorder, Bird Flu and Cohn's Disease. For more of her articles, go to

<http://www.imedicalvillage.com>

now.

### **Crohn's Disease and Stress**

**By Ed Kalski**

It was so tough in those early years. Not knowing what was wrong. I didn't know what to think. Was I going crazy? The doctor said I have a nervous stomach. I'm not a nervous person.

Then I was diagnosed with Crohn's Disease. Even though it's a chronic disease without a cure, it was a relief to know what was wrong. But then the reality set in. How was my life going to change?

And change it did. In 1985 I was admitted into a hospital suffering from a stomach obstruction. A surgeon had to remove a foot and a half from my small intestines. The pain was terrible. I never, repeat never, want to go through that pain again. Ever.

After going through the pain of an operation, knowing that people with Crohn's Disease can have more than one operation, I couldn't help but wonder what I could do to help my situation? It occurred to me that, in the least, I could learn to handle the stress from the disease and the stress from life itself. I knew that stress, in and of itself, could cause my symptoms to worsen.

No, the stress didn't cause Crohn's Disease, but it sure could affect the amount of pain I would experience. I knew it was possible for me to deal with my stress better than I had dealt with it in the past. Before the operation, I was fairly motivated to work at controlling my stress. After the operation, I was highly motivated. I was determined to do everything in my power to improve my situation.

So how could I handle life's stress better? I had to learn what I could about dealing with stress and to then develop the necessary skills to make it happen. I learned about the close relationship between relaxation and stress relief. I learned to meditate, I learned to set reasonable expectations about my life and desires, and I learned to be more objective about what was happening to me physically and mentally.

I've come to the conclusion that people with Crohn's Diseases can do a lot to help themselves with the stress in their life. Not only can we do a lot to help ourselves, but we can also get support from loved ones as well as others going through the same circumstances.

I have three steps to offer others to help them control the stress in their lives. The first is to learn to

## Coping With Crohn's Disease

meditate, the second is to learn visualization and the third is to get support.

By watching my emotions closely, I could know quickly when the stress in my life was building up too fast. I could then take a little time to meditate. I learned the different strategies of meditation and found one that worked good for me.

In addition to meditation, I learned visualization. Whenever I felt myself getting stressed out, I could visualize myself at St. Simon Island, a place I love and go to once a year. Just thinking of the different locations on the Island, I could feel myself relax. And with practice I've got quite good at visualization.

Finally, there's the Crohn's Disease message boards on the internet. What a wonderful resource they are. To be able to talk with people who are going through the same situation. You can't put a price on that. It's invaluable. I highly recommend everyone with Crohn`s Disease to use this resource.

I believe that anyone with Crohn's Disease (or any chronic disease) can improve their life by taking the time to learn and implement the three part strategy I've outlined above. It's has worked wonderfully for me and I believe it can work for others as well.

Ed Kalski has had Crohn's Disease for over 25 years. He has created a website for people with Crohn's Disease that provides a lot of valuable information and links to many resources.

Visit the website at:

<http://www.crohns-disease-and-stress.com>

Crohn's Disease and Stress

Crohn's Disease

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