



# spotlight on health

## Survey Suggests Millions May Suffer From Treatable Digestive Disorder, But Not Know It

(NAPSA)—If you're among the millions of Americans who take antacids regularly to control heartburn, you could be ignoring symptoms of a treatable digestive disorder called gastroesophageal reflux disease, commonly referred to as GERD.

According to a new survey, symptoms that may be related to GERD are common among millions of Americans, with nine in 10 (88 percent) saying they have experienced at least one symptom, such as bloating or gas (71 percent), heartburn (62 percent), and persistent belching or burping (49 percent). On average, those who experienced these symptoms say they occur one to two days per week—which can add up to 104 days a year.

Yet, the majority of Americans do not associate many of these symptoms with the disorder, which can delay diagnosis and treatment.

Two-time Olympic Gold Medalist swimmer, Tom Dolan, is one of the more than seven million people in the United States who suffer from GERD.

"During college, I began suffering from painful heartburn and acid reflux. I didn't think much about it and tried antacids, but they only provided temporary relief," Dolan recalled. "I ignored my symptoms until they started to interfere with my competitive swimming. My doctor diagnosed GERD and prescribed Aciphex (rabeprazole sodium). Now, my symptoms are under control, and I can concentrate on swimming in the 2004 Olympics."

Early diagnosis and treatment for GERD can help reduce—or even eliminate—these symptoms, but almost 70 percent of those surveyed who suffer symptoms have not discussed them with a healthcare professional.



"People often dismiss symptoms of GERD as nothing more than an annoyance, but—if left untreated—it can lead to other, more serious medical conditions," said Stephen A. Brunton, MD, director of Faculty Development, Stamford Hospital/Columbia University Family Practice Residency Program, Stamford, CT. "Tom was right to seek medical attention and treatment before his condition got worse. With the effective treatments available today, there is little reason for a person with GERD to suffer."

### About GERD

GERD is often characterized by the presence of symptoms such as heartburn, regurgitation, belching and early satiety (feeling of being full sooner than normal or after eating less than usual), with or without evidence of erosion to the esophagus.

GERD occurs when stomach acid moves in the wrong direction, flowing back—or refluxing—into the esophagus (the tube that carries food from your throat to your stomach), commonly causing discomfort.

"Aciphex helped me and my active lifestyle," said Gold-Medalist Dolan. "If you have acid reflux, it's important to talk to

your doctor about treatments that can help you."

The survey, co-sponsored by Eisai Inc. and Janssen Pharmaceutica Inc., was conducted by Harris Interactive among a nationally representative random sample of 1,007 adults.

The margin of error for the total sample is +/- 3.1 percent.

For more information on heartburn and GERD, speak to a healthcare professional or visit [www.Aciphex.com](http://www.Aciphex.com).

Aciphex is indicated for the treatment of symptomatic gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), healing of erosive GERD, maintenance of healed erosive GERD, healing of duodenal ulcers and treatment of symptoms related to these conditions. Aciphex product labeling recommends once-daily dosing for most indications.

Aciphex has a well-established safety record. In studies, the most common side effect possibly related to Aciphex was headache (2.4 percent vs. 1.6 percent for sugar pill). Aciphex should not be used if you have had an allergic reaction to Aciphex, its tablet ingredients, or any proton pump inhibitor (PPI). Reduction in symptoms during treatment with Aciphex does not rule out the presence of gastric malignancy. Patients treated with any PPI, like Aciphex, and warfarin (such as Coumadin®) may need to be monitored more closely with their doctor.

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For important safety information on Aciphex, visit [www.aciphex.com](http://www.aciphex.com).