



WOMEN'S HEALTH

New Treatment For Irritable Bowel Syndrome

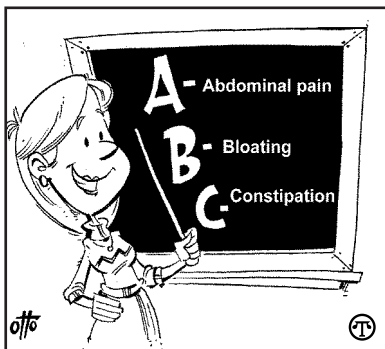
(NAPSA)—It's common and it's uncomfortable, but it's treatable. Irritable bowel syndrome, or IBS, affects one in five Americans, the majority of which are women. Many of these women can now find comfort in a new treatment.

IBS, characterized by abdominal pain or discomfort, bloating and altered bowel function (constipation or diarrhea), is second only to the common cold as a leading cause of workplace absenteeism. It accounts for nearly 12 percent of all visits to primary care physicians, and 28 percent of visits to gastroenterologists.

New research has yielded a better understanding of IBS and its causes. People who have IBS with constipation have a lower gastrointestinal (GI) tract that may be more sensitive and work more slowly than it should. This may be due to the way their lower GI tract reacts to changes in a naturally occurring chemical in their body that regulates motility and the perception of pain and discomfort.

The Food and Drug Administration has approved a new drug for the short-term treatment of women with IBS whose primary symptom is constipation.

Zelnorm™, developed by Novartis, is the first agent in a new class of drugs called serotonin-4 receptor agonists developed to target the GI tract. By imitating the action of serotonin, Zelnorm helps to normalize and coordinate movement along the intestine. It is the first agent proven to provide relief of the multiple symptoms of abdominal pain and discomfort, bloating and constipation associated with IBS.



If you are experiencing these symptoms, please speak to a physician for more information and possible treatment options.

The FDA approval of Zelnorm is based on clinical trials that demonstrate its ability to provide relief of the multiple symptoms of abdominal pain and discomfort, bloating and constipation associated with IBS. Three multicenter, double-blind, placebo-controlled studies involved 2,470 women with at least a three-month history of IBS symptoms prior to the study baseline period. Patients received either a 6-mg dose of Zelnorm twice a day or placebo over a three-month period.

In clinical trials, Zelnorm is shown to be safe and generally well-tolerated. Side effects that occurred significantly more often with Zelnorm than the placebo included headache (15 percent versus 12 percent) and diarrhea (nine percent versus four percent). The efficacy of Zelnorm in men has not been established.

Those experiencing the multiple symptoms of IBS should speak to a physician for proper diagnosis and treatment.