

# SEE YOUR DOCTOR

## Crohn's Disease: Victim or Victor?

(NAPSA)—Strained marriages, cancelled social commitments, even fears about traveling too far from a bathroom, are among the casualties of dealing with Crohn's disease, a chronic condition that usually affects the intestines. Unfortunately, many people with the disease suffer in silence because of improper diagnosis or a feeling that "it's all in my head."

It isn't. Some 500,000 people in the U.S. suffer from Crohn's disease, according to the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America (CCFA), a national education and support group. Crohn's is chronic and incurable, and currently, a total "victory" over the disease isn't possible. Understanding the disease, however, and getting proper medical treatment as well as emotional support, can make you feel more like a victor than a victim.

### Understanding Crohn's Disease

Crohn's disease can be misdiagnosed since its symptoms may mirror other diseases. If you frequently suffer from any of these symptoms, you should see a doctor.

- Cramps and abdominal pain
- Persistent diarrhea
- Rectal bleeding
- Fever
- Loss of appetite and/or weight loss

Crohn's disease causes inflammation in the digestive tract. It usually affects the last part of the small intestine (ileum) and/or the first part of the large intestine (colon) but can occur in any section of the gastrointestinal (GI) tract.

Many factors, genetic and environmental, may act together to cause the disease. Crohn's disease



**Doctors can now prescribe new medication that may help improve quality of life for many people with Crohn's disease.**

occurs more commonly in adolescents and young adults but anyone, at any age, can be affected.

### Diagnosis and Treatment

Your doctor may take X-rays to understand what part of the GI tract is affected and use a colonoscope or sigmoidoscope to help confirm a diagnosis. Both scopes are illuminated tubes that make it possible to see into the rectum and the large bowel.

It is possible to achieve periods of remission or improvement when symptoms subside or go away completely. These periods of remission are usually interrupted by flares (active episodes of the disease) when the symptoms return or become worse.

The main goals of Crohn's disease treatment are to provide relief from symptoms and reduce the number of flare-ups. Entocort™ EC (budesonide) capsule is a prescription drug approved last fall by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) designed to treat and

control the symptoms of Crohn's disease. For many people with mild to moderate active Crohn's disease involving the ileum and/or ascending colon, the medication can control the symptoms of disease flares with fewer side effects than other steroids. Individual results may vary.

The medicine is not for everyone; it is contraindicated in patients with known hypersensitivity to budesonide. People who take this drug may require supplemental treatment with a systemic glucocorticosteroid if they are undergoing surgery and subject to other stressful situations. They need to follow their doctors' directions when switching to Entocort™ EC from a systemic glucocorticosteroid. This will help them avoid health risks. Patients taking corticosteroids should try to avoid exposure to infections such as chicken pox or measles.

### Emotional Support

Often the final step in dealing with Crohn's disease—and becoming a victor—is getting emotional support. Explain the disease to your family and friends and communicate that there may be times when you need additional rest or have to cancel plans at the last minute.

There are a number of resources that can provide support and keep you posted on new developments in treatments. Patients can call the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America (CCFA) at 1-800-932-2423 or visit the Web site at [www.cdfa.org](http://www.cdfa.org). More information on Entocort™ EC, including product information, is at [www.EntocortEC.com](http://www.EntocortEC.com).