



# Health Awareness

## Actress Lynda Carter Champions The Need To Talk About IBS

(NAPSA)—When Americans think of the most chronic health conditions affecting the nation today, the words heart disease, depression, asthma and diabetes probably come to mind. Actually, there is a difficult and embarrassing illness with recurring symptoms that is more prevalent than each of these conditions, but most people don't want to talk about it—it's Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) with constipation, characterized by abdominal discomfort or pain, bloating and constipation. A nationwide public awareness initiative to educate women about the symptoms and management of this disorder is getting help from "Wonder Woman"—actress Lynda Carter.

The program, called Talk IBS, aims to help women work with their physicians, reducing the time it takes to get proper diagnosis and care. The initiative was sparked by the findings of *Irritable Bowel Syndrome in Women: The Unmet Needs*, a new report reviewed by a panel of five leading experts and presented by the Society for Women's Health Research. The report reveals that IBS with constipation significantly affects the physical, social and emotional well-being of the people who have it.

The report found that although IBS strikes up to 20 percent of the adult American population and costs the U.S. healthcare system up to an estimated \$30 billion annually, it remains under-diagnosed, mistreated and is often misunderstood. As a result, it can take IBS sufferers nearly three years from the time they first experience their symptoms to receive an official diagnosis.

"My mother suffered with IBS with constipation for over 30 years because she never got the



**Actress Lynda Carter, daughter of an IBS sufferer, urges those with multiple symptoms of IBS to consult a physician.**

proper diagnosis or care," said Carter. "I want to urge everyone who suffers from the multiple symptoms of IBS to speak to their physician for proper diagnosis because, for many patients, IBS can now be managed effectively."

IBS is one of the most common gastrointestinal disorders and is a leading cause of workplace absenteeism, second only to the common cold. While IBS touches all demographic groups it is most common among women and younger adults.

"IBS is a serious problem affecting millions of Americans and it is crucial that we highlight this often debilitating condition," said Phyllis Greenberger, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Society for Women's Health Research, the only national organization devoted to improving the health of women through research. "Approximately 70 percent of those with IBS are women, making this condition one of the

Complete this questionnaire about IBS with constipation and bring it with you to discuss with your doctor during your next visit.

1. What specific symptoms are you suffering from? (check all that apply)

- Abdominal discomfort or pain
- Bloating
- Constipation

2. Are the above symptoms recurring?

- YES  NO

3. Does having a bowel movement help to relieve your abdominal discomfort or pain?

- YES  NO

4. Do you have either hard or lumpy stools?

- YES  NO

5. Do you strain when you have a bowel movement?

- YES  NO

6. Do your symptoms ever disrupt your daily activities? (work, school, social life, etc.)

- YES  NO

7. What medicines or dietary supplements are you currently taking for your IBS symptoms (including prescription and over-the-counter medicines)?

8. Have these medicines relieved all your symptoms?

- YES  NO

many that affects women more than men."

The Talk IBS campaign provides a self-assessment questionnaire, an informative brochure and a comprehensive Web site, [www.talkIBS.org](http://www.talkIBS.org). Information is also found at 1-86-NEWS-4-IBS (1-866-397-4427).

Talk IBS and Lynda Carter's involvement in the Talk IBS campaign are supported by Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation.