

Overcoming Crohn's Disease & Ulcerative Colitis

RESTORING HEALTH BY CHOOSING NATURAL HYGIENE,
THE "ROAD LESS TRAVELLED"

by Roz Reynolds

Fifty years ago, I was given the diagnoses of Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. Instead of choosing a traditional medical treatment of drugs, surgery, and relapses, I opted for a holistic approach. It allowed me a life of health and plant-based foods, which medical doctors said I would never be able to eat without excruciating pain. Boy, were they wrong!

When I was in elementary school, I began having abdominal pains every time I ate. I would double over and hold my stomach until the pain subsided. You might think someone in my family would have noticed this, but as with many families "back in the day" and probably even today, everyone was preoccupied with their own lives. As time went on, I began to think it was normal to have pain after I ate.

I was the youngest of three children. My brothers were 15 and 16 years older than me. Since I was the only daughter, my mother was very protective and didn't let me out of her sight, if at all possible. I was not allowed to leave my house except for school, and then I had to come directly home. Food and the TV were used early in my upbringing as a way for my mother to keep me nearby.

The food I ate was SAD, otherwise known as the Standard American Diet. I grew up in a Jewish family, and if you know anything about Jewish cooking, it calls for lots of fatty meats, greasy foods, fried foods, and, of course, baked pastries laden with fat and sugar. My mom was a very good cook and excelled in creating baked goods. So, the stage was set.

Open communication was not encouraged in my home, so I used food for comfort when anything bothered me. And because I grew up with two overweight parents, there was no one to teach me portion control. It was typical to have an entire brisket or chicken on the table, and I was allowed to eat as much as I wanted. It was the same with desserts. From this I became a volume eater at a very young age and started to gain weight. By the time I was 12 years old, I probably already had Crohn's disease and colitis.

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Diagnosis

Fast forward to my very early twenties. It was 1972, and I was married with two young daughters. By then my weight had ballooned to nearly 200 pounds. Through the years, I'd continued to suffer with untreated abdominal pain, and one day, while eating my typical fast-food lunch of a greasy hamburger, French fries, and a coke, I developed severe abdominal pain that would not subside. I could barely move. I found myself vomiting and having diarrhea all at the same time while breaking into a sweat, running a 104-degree fever, and feeling faint. My husband rushed me to the emergency room in Detroit, Michigan, which is where I grew up and was living at this time.



I was put through a battery of upper- and lower-GI tests, and it was determined that I had ulcerative colitis and "terminal ileitis" (which is what they called Crohn's disease back then). It was also discovered that I had a fistula in my intestines, which is an opening in the gut that allows intestinal juices to flow into the body, causing infection. I was immediately put on several drugs including cortisone, prednisone, and Azulfidine, which caused drastic reactions—vomiting, nausea, more abdominal pain, fever, and diarrhea.

I was told I would need emergency surgery because I had a near-bowel obstruction, and about 18 inches of my intestine would need to be removed. At this time, I was also informed that the prognosis was most likely more surgeries due to the scar tissue that would form at the site of the resection, and I would eventually have to have more sections of my intestine removed as the disease progressed. Doctors said that ultimately I would have to have any remaining intestine removed, in which case I would need an ileostomy (where a person wears a bag to evacuate feces and no longer has normal bowel function).

None of this was health-building, only health-destroying. In addition, the doctors said that I would never be able to eat raw vegetables or fruit again, and that my food would need to be very bland, cooked, and puréed. However in the same breath, I was told that I could drink coffee and eat whatever I wanted, including meat, dairy, sugar, and fat. I was not as educated then as I am today, but I had enough common sense to know this was not how I wanted to live the rest of my life.

My Bridge to Health

Some of you may remember my late brother, Dr. Jack Goldstein, who wrote and published the book *Triumph Over Disease Through Fasting and Natural Diet*. It was lucky for me that my brother had discovered natural hygiene. When he came back from the Korean War, where he served in the Army, he had a severe case of ulcerative colitis. In his case, the doctors gave up on him and basically sent him home to die.

Jack discovered books that educated him on the miracles of fasting and how the body, if given proper rest and pure water, could heal itself. He was granted 25 years of extraordinary health by following the dictates of Dr. Herbert Shelton. Jack did the first of his many fasts under the care of Dr. Robert Gross at his and Joy Gross's facility in upstate New York. (By the way, Jack was president of the ANHS, both locally and nationally, for several years once he recovered. He was a very active member of our beloved organization.)



ROZ WITH HER HERO, DR. DAVID SCOTT

Shortly after my diagnosis, I called Jack and asked for his help. The next day, my husband drove me to Dr. David Scott's fasting facility in Strongsville, Ohio, to partake in my very first fast to see if I could recover from my intestinal misery. I also had eczema on my legs and arms and had been suffering with itching and scabbing for my entire life.

Once I arrived at Dr. Scott's, I was put to bed and given distilled water. My fast lasted for 36 days. I ate no food, drank only pure water, and got plenty of rest. After only three days of water fasting, I noticed the abdominal pain I had suffered with my entire life was gone! After another few days, I was taken by Dr. Scott to a facility where I was given a test to see if the fistula was still leaking.

My fistula had closed up, and by then my fever was gone as well. In addition, the eczema I had suffered with was completely healed.

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Staying on the Path

That fast was the first of several supervised fasts I would undertake over the next many years to maintain my health and to continue healing the damage I had internally. I fasted one other time at Dr. Scott's, twice at TrueNorth Health Center in California under Dr. Alan Goldhamer, and twice in Hyde Park, New York, under the late Dr. Robert Gross. I also did many short fasts at home under the watch of my brother, Jack, and later I did several under the guidance of Dr. Joel Fuhrman. I also have learned much from Dr. John McDougall and his starch-based way of eating.

I did one more fast in November 2019 at Dr. Gracie's. We planned for a 30-day stay, but I ended up fasting for only 10 days—my shortest one ever, but we both knew it was time to stop. Knowing that I'd become an avid cook, Dr. Gracie made me an offer: I could stay for the full 30 days and help cook all the meals for the other patients using my own recipes. Luckily, I had them in my phone! One night, Mark and Wanda Huberman and a



few other friends in the NHA came for dinner at Dr. Gracie's, and I cooked the entire main course. What an honor!

From my first fast until now I have been blessed to be educated in plant-based eating, which for me has meant eliminating all animal products, including dairy, fats, chicken, fish, eggs, fast foods, fried foods, sodas, alcohol, and sugary foods. Those have been replaced by the wonderful world of plants, vegetables, starch-based foods, fruits, nuts, seeds, and legumes. I have also learned so many wonderful ways to prepare these foods, and not once have I missed my SAD diet.

What I really gave up was pain, inflammation, a life of drugs (and most likely, lots of surgeries), and perhaps a shortened lifespan. I have been given a life beyond my wildest dreams, a life filled with health, energy, and passion for healthy eating. I am also a graduate of Dr. T. Colin Campbell's plant-based nutrition course. I love helping others who are interested in achieving a healthier lifestyle.

My life really began when I was introduced to this fantastic, life-changing organization many years ago when I was so very sick. I am proud to say I am a Lifetime Member of the NHA and on the board of directors of this wonderful organization run by our gifted and committed president, Mark Huberman. I don't know where I would be today if I had not taken "the road less travelled," but I believed in my heart that there was a natural way to heal my body, and I found it. 🌱