

Is this simple barley drink a cure for IBS?

LAURA MILNE takes a look at a new treatment for this troublesome condition

FOR almost a decade Ruth Morris was virtually a prisoner in her own home. The 66-year-old grandmother's life was ruled by her Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), which caused crippling pains, bloating, wind and chronic diarrhoea, and meant she could never be far from a toilet. Ordinary activities such as going on holiday, eating out, visiting the theatre or even popping to the shops were off limits.

The condition, which affects nearly a fifth of the population and is more prevalent in women, was triggered by a routine gall bladder operation.

"I was terrified to go out," says Ruth, from Waterloo, Merseyside. "Even going to the shops was an ordeal as I often had to abandon my trolley and rush to the toilet."

"For two years I hardly saw my three step-grandchildren. They only live in Buxton, Derbyshire, but even a two-hour car journey was impossible."

"I didn't have a holiday for four years and even going to a restaurant was a 'no-no' because an hour after eating I'd get this horrendous pain, worse than the pain of labour, and then be rushing to the loo."

"It was impossible to go to the theatre, something I really enjoyed doing, as it would mean disrupting everyone on the row every time I needed to go to the toilet."

Ruth, who is married to Brian and

runs the family's continental patisserie business, tried numerous medications for the condition, including anti-spasmodic and anti-diarrhoea drugs, to relieve her chronic symptoms but none of them worked.

She resigned herself to the fact that she might have to learn to live with the condition until she read about the results of a hospital trial involving a new treatment.

Called **Symprove** it is made from barley with live and "ready-to-work" bacteria. It has been proven in an independent NHS hospital study to combat IBS symptoms including bloating, constipation, cramping pain and diarrhoea with no side effects.

The double blind, placebo-controlled trial run by King's College Hospital, London, involved 186 patients suffering from moderate to severe IBS for whom common treatments had failed.

Over the course of three months Symprove was effective in significantly reducing the severity of a range of IBS symptoms and in particular pain, constipation and diarrhoea.

Dr Anton Emmanuel, consultant gastroenterologist at University College Hospital London, says: "Over the past few decades changes in lifestyle have altered the natural ecology of the gut, providing one probable cause of the increase in gastro conditions such as IBS and inflammatory bowel disease."

"Symprove aims to rebalance the



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gut's microflora (often referred to as "good bacteria") which is key to its success as a multi-symptom treatment for IBS.

"Because it is water-based, unlike dairy or freeze-dried preparations, there is emerging evidence that it can deliver live bacteria direct to the gut without them being destroyed in the stomach's hostile digestive process."

Ruth says: "I did a bit of research and thought I'd give it a try. It was miraculous, it completely removed my symptoms. It was incredible."

Following the success of the IBS study further research is being done into **Symprove** as a treatment for diverticular disease, ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease.

A three-month course of Symprove is recommended initially. A typical dose is one millilitre per kilo of body weight.

Many patients then go on to take a daily maintenance dose (half measure).

● *A four-bottle pack costs £79 and works out at £2.60 per day, based on an average 65ml daily dose. It is available from www.symprove.com or by calling 01252 413 600.*

Picture: Carl Sukonik/THE VAIN PHOTOGRAPH



MIRACULOUS: Ruth's life has been transformed by the remedy