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# Julie finds relief at last from the condition that blighted her life...

**Sarah Dunn** finds out about a treatment that could be a potential remedy for the thousands of IBS sufferers in Manchester

FOR more than a decade, mum-of-two Julie Howard went back and forth to the doctors trying to find a solution to the debilitating condition of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) she had endured for 12 years.

Symptoms vary, but for Julie the main issues have been severe bloating and acid reflux – whereby acid from the stomach leaks into the gullet causing heartburn and other discomfort – which was once so severe it burned the inside of her

mouth.

Unable to get any relief from the chronic pain and discomfort, the housewife from Hyde soon noticed an impact on her mood.

“It’s left me feeling really depressed at times,” Julie explains.

“The bloating has been the worst thing. It’s as if my stomach doesn’t empty properly.”

Over the years the

46-year-old made many visits to her GP and hospital, enduring grueling tests including a gastroscopy – where a camera is passed through the mouth and down the throat to examine the gullet and stomach.

A raft of different pills were prescribed – including drugs to relax her stomach, tablets for nausea, and medication to control stomach acid – but nothing worked.

Worse still, some of them left

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Julie with side effects, including lethargy and depression.

“It was very frustrating trying things and nothing worked,” she remembers.

“Some of them made me feel even more down.”

Then Julie read about a medical trial led by King’s College Hospital in London, which clinically assessed the effectiveness of a new probiotic drink called Symprove in reducing and controlling IBS symptoms includ-



ing constipation, diarrhoea, cramps, pain and bloating.

Probiotics use 'good' bacteria to restore balance in the digestive system, since such symptoms can occur when the scales are tipped in favour of the 'bad' bacteria.

Julie now takes the drink every day and in just six weeks has noticed a huge change in her condition.

Julie, who is married to manufacturing chairman David and mum to Amy, 21, and James, 17, says: "When I read about Symprove I was quite positive because it was a proper hospital trial and I thought it sounded promising.

"I had tried other probiotics in the past but they didn't work like Symprove – as soon as I started taking it I noticed the difference.

"Now I take it every morning and I can't tell you how good it's been. It really gets rid of any bloating and I feel I have a whole new lease of life."

The treatment could be a potential remedy for the thousands of IBS sufferers in Manchester. A survey by the research team revealed 30 per cent of residents are regularly

blighted by symptoms, and 15 per cent forced to take time off work because of it.

The three-month, NHS-funded trial involved 186 patients diagnosed with moderate to severe IBS, half of whom took Symprove daily, and the other half a placebo.

By the end, 60 per cent of those taking the drink had seen an improvement – with many becoming free of symptoms completely.

The treatment is different to other probiotic drinks which have flooded the supermarket shelves in recent years because it is water-based, rather than

freeze-dried or dairy-based.

This means it passes straight through the stomach without triggering digestion, allowing the probiotic bacteria to reach the small intestine where they can start working.

Gastroenterologist Professor Ingvar Bjarnason, who headed the trial – the first of its kind into probiotics – believes this could be what makes it effective.

"This may very well be the reason, together with the fact that Symprove has the right bacterial mix," he says.

He adds the results of the trial are a 'real breakthrough' for IBS sufferers.

"We now have robust evidence of a treatment that can reduce the severity of a range of IBS symptoms," he says. Because IBS is a multi-symptom condition, having a treatment that can address all areas of the disease is a major advancement.

"Many existing therapies also have severe side effects. But Symprove was well tolerated with none, which is another huge benefit for the patient."

Julie says she is thrilled to be free of the condition which has blighted her life for so long, adding: "I'm just so pleased that it's worked for me and IBS is no longer ruining my life."

» [Visitsymprove.com](http://Visitsymprove.com).

**'We now have robust evidence of a treatment that can reduce the severity of a range of IBS symptoms'**

Professor Ingvar Bjarnason



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