

Case Study:

Samantha Custodio: Digestive Disorder

As the mother of four young boys ages 1 to 10, Samantha Custodio didn't have time to be sick. But last fall, there she was, sidelined with severe abdominal pain, diarrhea, bleeding, and stomach cramps.

"I couldn't go anywhere without the constant fear that I would be struck with sudden severe twisting in my guts," says the Milton, Pa., resident. "I was miserable. My husband — who's an emergency nurse— and I both thought it was food poisoning."



Her primary care doctor thought so, too. But after weeks of testing for bacteria, parasites, and infection — which were all negative — she was referred to a gastroenterologist.

Samantha felt relieved.

"I was so sick for so long. All I wanted were answers," she says. "I felt confident a specialist could help." At her first appointment with the gastroenterologist, Samantha described her symptoms and reviewed her history with the doctor.

"She was amazing. Before doing any tests, the doctor suspected she knew what it was," says Samantha. Two days later, the doctor performed a colonoscopy procedure that confirmed her suspicions. Samantha had ulcerative colitis, an inflammatory bowel disease that causes inflammation and ulcers in the lining of the large intestine or colon. There is no cure for ulcerative colitis, but medicine can help. Samantha was immediately prescribed medication to calm the inflammation and allow the tissue to heal. Within days, her symptoms began to subside. "I felt so much better," she says.

Samantha continues to see the doctor every three to four months for careful management of her disease.

"Now that it's diagnosed and being managed properly, everything has changed," she adds. "I can take long walks with the kids, go bike riding, shopping — without any worry."

Bowel elimination is an essential function for the human body. Clients are often embarrassed about needing help with these functions.

Reflect on ways you can help your client (Samantha) to be more comfortable accepting help while getting their needs met. What could you say? What could you do?

I would focus on forming trust with the client so that she feels comfortable enough to speak to me about accepting help. I would find support groups that work around her daily life so that she could find other people experiencing the same issues, so that she knows she is not alone. I would say things like "I understand this can feel like an awkward thing to deal with" and "Everyone needs help with bowel elimination at some point". I would offer her a lot of reassurance and make sure she knew that this is totally okay and that it is nothing to be embarrassed about.

Disorders of Absorption and Elimination

Match the term with the definition.

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| 1. Colonoscopy __H__ | A. An incarcerated hernia whose blood supply has been cut off leading to tissue death | |
| 2. Peritonitis __K__ | B. Age 40 and up; IBD; genetics; high fat, high protein, low fiber diet; polyps | |
| 3. Irreducible hernia __O__ | C. Increase fiber & fluids; stool softener; Sitz bath | |
| 4. Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) __T__ | D. Swollen, twisted, varicose veins in the rectal region | |
| 5. Bowel obstruction types __G__ | E. Inflammation of the appendix | |
| 6. Ulcerative colitis s/s __I__ | F. Inflammation of the diverticula | |
| 7. Non-mechanical bowel obstruction treatment __L__ | G. Mechanical or paralytic | |
| 8. Diverticulitis __F__ | H. Examination of the colon using a flexible scope | |
| 9. Diverticulitis Treatment __D__ | I. Bloody diarrhea, pain, weight loss | |
| 10. Appendicitis (definition) __E__ | J. RLQ pain, low grade fever, nausea, rebound tenderness | |
| 11. Appendicitis S/S __J__ | K. Can be fatal if not treated promptly | |
| 12. Colon cancer risk factors __W__ | L. GI rest; NPO; ambulate; IV fluids | |
| 13. Colon cancer screening __X__ | M. Worms in GI tract | |
| 14. Large bowel obstruction s/s __Q__ | N. Surgical adaption to waste removal | |
| 15. Dehydration S/S __V__ | O. Cannot be returned to its organic region via manual manipulation | |
| 16. Hemorrhoids __D__ | P. I.V. antibiotics, opioids for severe pain, stool softeners and bulk forming laxatives | |
| 17. Ostomy __N__ | Q. wavelike abdominal pain & fecal vomiting | |
| 18. Hemorrhoidectomy considerations __C__ | R. Surgical removal of all or part of the colon | |
| 19. Small bowel obstruction s/s __U__ | S. Highly transmissible spore containing diarrhea | |
| 20. Strangulated hernia __A__ | T. Periodic disturbances of bowel function, usually associated with abdominal pain | |
| 21. Causes of IBS __B__ | U. Gradual onset; pain; vomiting; distention; bowel sounds present then become hypoactive | |
| 22. Hernia __Y__ | V. Dry mucous membranes; Lower urine output and concentrated; Weakness; Hypotension | |
| 23. C-Diff __S__ | W. Factors include heredity, stress, high-fat diet, irritating foods, alcohol, and smoking use | |
| 24. Colectomy __R__ | X. Ages 50-75; fecal occult blood test annually; Colonoscopy q10y | |
| 25. Parasitic infections __M__ | Y. Protrusion of the intestine through a weakness in the abdominal wall | |