Don’t Let Digestive Discomfort Become The “New Normal”

A recent survey conducted online by Harris Poll on behalf of the American Gastroenterological Association (AGA) and sponsored by AbbVie is shedding light on what the public and physicians know about the role of the pancreas in gastrointestinal (GI) health, and a little-known condition called exocrine pancreatic insufficiency (EPI). The EPI Uncovered survey was conducted with 1,001 adults who have experienced at least two GI issues three or more times in the past three months, 250 primary care physicians (“PCPs”), and 250 gastroenterologists (“GIs”).

EPI Uncovered was commissioned by the American Gastroenterological Association and conducted with the financial support of AbbVie to uncover barriers to diagnosis of EPI and explore the understanding of the role of the pancreas in digestive health. The online survey was conducted by Harris Poll from May 17 through June 20, 2016, and included 1,001 U.S. adults ages 18 and older who have experienced at least two gastrointestinal issues three or more times in the past three months, as well as 250 primary care physicians (“PCPs”) and 250 gastroenterologists (“GIs”) in the U.S. who are ages 18 years or older and licensed. Figures for patients were weighted where necessary on education, age, gender, race/ethnicity, region, income, size of household, marital status, and propensity to be online to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population. Figures for PCPs and GIs were weighted on years in practice, gender, and region, where necessary, to bring them into line with their actual proportions in the population.


If someone is experiencing ongoing GI issues, it could be the result of an unrecognized condition known as exocrine pancreatic insufficiency (EPI).

EPI limits the pancreas’ ability to break down food, resulting in uncomfortable symptoms:

- Frequent gas and/or abdominal bloating
- Unexplained stomach pains
- Frequent diarrhea
- Foul-smelling, greasy stools

If not, you’re not alone: While 75% of patients say they know what the pancreas is, only 13% consider themselves to be “very knowledgeable” about its role in digestion. This under-appreciated organ provides the enzymes that properly digest food into nutrients.

Speaking transparently with a physician—and elevating the issue to a gastroenterologist—may help to achieve the right diagnosis the first time.

Don’t ignore digestive discomfort. Talk to your doctor if you are experiencing distressing GI trouble, as they can diagnose if it is being caused by EPI.

Visit identifyEPI.com to learn more and utilize the AGA GI Locator Service, available at www.gastro.org/GILocator, to find a gastroenterologist in your area.

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EPI Uncovered

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