

Introduction

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“Each patient carries his own doctor inside of him. They come to us not knowing the truth. We are at our best when we give the doctor that resides within each patient a chance to go to work.”

ALBERT SCHWEITZER

The concept for this book has been bouncing around my brain for years. To be honest, I never felt that I was ready to write it, or that I had enough to offer to make it worthwhile. However, as I explained my condition to a new acquaintance, I suddenly realized that my experience with gastroparesis and my clinical training had morphed into a unique understanding and perspective on the condition.

I knew that the me of years past, with all of the confusion and disorientation I felt for many years after my diagnosis, would have given quite a bit to know what I know now. And I had to share that knowledge in the hopes that it could be of use to someone else in a similar situation. This mix of experience and knowledge regarding gastroparesis and health come from the following:

- Fourteen years of living with severe gastroparesis
- A Doctor of Pharmacy degree
- Clinical pharmacy residency training
- Six years of practice as a clinical pharmacist

My intent in this book is not to prescribe a lifestyle, treatment, or outlook. My goal is to provide the tools necessary for every person to better understand how to navigate this condition, along with sound medical information and advice stemming

from my professional and personal experiences. I have no disclosures regarding personal or financial relationships nor any incentive for personal gain from the topics to be discussed.

Most information found here will be interpreted differently for each person and each situation. All recommendations, advice, or ideas related to medical treatment should always be discussed with a medical provider familiar with your situation.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This book was written with the objective of helping you to become an empowered self-advocate. This involves having the knowledge and confidence to interpret and understand your options, ask the right questions, and be fully involved in your own care and health status.

You'll notice that the book has a somewhat unique format with a large margin on each page that contains information of its own. This was done to improve readability and focus within the text, moving all other notes and points to a separate location. Everything that can be found in the margin correlates directly to the text that is right alongside it. This will include images and visual representations of what is being discussed, side notes and comments, and bottom-line summaries for complicated topics. These same margins can be used by you for your personal notes on the information that is being covered and how it applies directly to your journey and experiences.

The information in the book is meant to build on itself. The first chapter will provide information that will make the second chapter easier to understand, and so on. Any time a topic which was already discussed is mentioned again, the page number is referenced for easy review. There is also an index available in the back of the book to allow for quick navigation to specific topics. However,

the most value will be gained by reading the book all the way through before hopping around.

The first and largest section of this book provides general and foundational information. This will weave together to provide you with a thorough understanding for the GI tract, how medications work, the implications of gastroparesis and related GI conditions, and many of the terms that are often thrown around. It will also teach you how to evaluate and interpret the information that you find when doing your own research and when new ideas or treatments are suggested to you by friends, family members, or doctors. The goal is for you to walk away from this section armed with the ability to face the questions, doubts, fears, and uncertainties that gastroparesis can present.

The second section of this book addresses specific questions and issues that stem from having gastroparesis and many of its complications. This includes the medications and treatments that are often used with gastroparesis and related GI conditions, as well as notes to consider for medications that are used to treat other conditions. While the first section is meant to empower you on the topics of gastroparesis and health as a whole, the second section is meant to provide sound information regarding specific medical concerns that commonly arise for those of us with gastroparesis.

You will also find that my personal experience with gastroparesis is sprinkled throughout the book. Learning about the experiences of others has always been helpful to me in a variety of ways, from emotional reassurance to shaping my own management plan. I made every effort to be sincere and genuine in the recounting of my journey, and I hope that this may, in turn, be helpful to others.

In order to evaluate how this type of guidance can improve quality of life for people with gastroparesis (and chronic diagnoses in general), I have created an opportunity for you to participate in a voluntary study. See the margin for the details!

Here is where you might find a summary of the information being discussed in the text, such as:

Part 1: Provides foundational information that will help you in making decisions throughout the future

Part 2: Provides focused information on specific medical topics and treatments

Here is where you will find side notes or even summaries on the topics being discussed in the main text.

The rest of this open space can be used by you!

Study Participation
Fill out a 1-2 minute survey now, and then one more time when you finish the book. The study will be used in a larger effort to make such services readily available through doctor's offices and paid for via health insurance.

www.yourgijourney.com/s1