

# What's Wrong With Me?

DESPITE CRIPPLING PAIN, GINA ROBERTS-GREY LET EMBARRASSMENT AND FEAR PREVENT HER FROM GETTING THE DIAGNOSIS SHE NEEDED.



WHEN MY SON, ZACHARY, WAS A BABY, his diapers were a constant source of conversation. I compared war stories and swapped notes with family, friends and other mothers to reassure myself that his poop was perfectly normal. And it was. But when it came to me, what happened in the bathroom stayed in the bathroom.

My lips were sealed about the fact that over the years, that little room of relief began to hold a very special place in my heart. I grew up with what I thought was a sensitive stomach. A few times a year, without predictability, one porcelain bowl became a best friend as my digestive tract turned into my worst enemy. These episodes always started with abdominal churning and rumbling that in as little as 15 minutes grew into overwhelming severe pain. Whether I had to expertly maneuver myself out of the bleachers at my high school's basketball game or give the illusion of calmly getting up from my chair during a deadline-filled day at work, I'd speedily make it to the toilet. Once there, I was never sure what I'd face: diarrhea or constipation. Either way, one trip was rarely enough, so to prevent an accident I'd stay close to the bathroom. At times I've curled up in a ball on its cool tile floor or doubled over on the toilet to try to block out the blinding aches...until the next wave of urgency hit. It could go on like this for a few hours or a few days.

When I realized I wasn't the only person in my family who spent lots of time in the bathroom, I accepted that I was doomed to this fate. But to protect my pride, I still kept my episodes a secret. Who wants to call in sick from



