



Don't worry,  
**Lynda Carter**  
assures, you  
don't have  
to be Wonder  
Woman to ...

## **Conquer** the IBS challenge

It's been more than 30 years since Lynda Carter sported the trademark red cape and crown she wore on the TV series *Wonder Woman*. But the 59-year-old's iconic status lives on—and she is using it to encourage women with IBS to speak up about their condition.

It's a role Lynda is qualified to play: She watched her mom cope with IBS, which went undiagnosed for 20 years. Luckily, Lynda isn't suffering the same fate. Although, she, too, has IBS, advances in treatment mean it can't stop her from living her life, and she's developed skills to help her overcome any IBS obstacle. Read on for her tips.

### ► **THE CHALLENGE:** Being in the dark about IBS

According to a study in the *American Journal of Gastroenterology*, people with IBS have a lot of unanswered questions—from what causes it, to the role of food, to their prognosis and more. The result? Unnecessary confusion and anxiety.

**CONQUER IT BY:** Asking away! “When I began having digestive troubles about 10 years ago,” Lynda notes,

## [COVER story]

"I had the benefit of my mother's experience so I wasn't totally blindsided." Even so, she had lots of questions like, "What dietary changes can help?" or, "How soon should I expect results from my meds?" that she brought up with her doctor. Too shy to bring up embarrassing symptoms? Try Lynda's advice: Practice what you need to say in front of a mirror before going to the doctor so it'll be easier for you to get the information out.

► **THE CHALLENGE:** Giving up junk foods like Lynda's favorite snack: cheese curls! Although the salty goodies were easy to grab, they triggered IBS symptoms. She also said good-bye to mac and cheese and fried snacks.

**CONQUER IT BY:** Retraining your palate The first thing Lynda did was to talk to herself every time she craved a symptom-triggering snack: "A few minutes with french

fries aren't worth a day or two of discomfort, I'd tell myself." Next, she focused on making smart swaps: "I would eat fresh veggies instead of fries," she says. "Once you detox from junk, healthy food tastes so much better." To try it yourself, introduce a healthful food to every meal, selecting those that are at their peak for the most intense flavor punch.

► **THE CHALLENGE:** Feeling like you're alone "IBS is an uncomfortable, taboo topic because you're mentioning bathroom habits," she says. "We don't want anyone to know what's happening." Yet you don't have to suffer in silence.

**CONQUER IT BY:** Making a "confession" "Muster up the courage to tell just one close family member or friend what's going on," she suggests. Telling just one person helps lift the taboo and opens the door to building a support system—one loved one at a time. 📱

—Gina Roberts-Grey

## Need help making the switch to healthier foods?

Ann Dunaway Teh, a registered dietitian in Marietta, GA, says these suggestions can help train your palate.

• **Tuck one of these in your purse or pocket:** It's a single-use disposable toothbrush! And use it after a meal or snack—you'll be less likely to cave in to a temptation if your mouth is minty fresh.

• **Make popcorn your salty snack:** Three cups of air-popped popcorn equal one serving of whole grain. Sprinkle on low-fat Parmesan cheese or spray with fat-free butter spray to lightly season.

• **Swap sugary drinks with your own "fruit soda":** Mix half a cup of 100% juice with half a cup of seltzer water.

