

# Getting The 411 On Crohn's Disease And Ulcerative Colitis

## *Crohn's & Colitis Foundation Offers Information Resource To Millions*

(NAPSA)—When Emily Tolve was diagnosed with Crohn's disease nearly two years ago, a barrage of questions ran through her head: What caused this disease? Is there a cure? What can I do to treat my symptoms? How much will treatments cost?

While Tolve was relieved to finally be able to put a name to her pain, she knew nothing about Crohn's disease and the impact it would have on her life. As a small-business owner from Denver, Colo., finding the right answers, fast, was paramount. Tolve's gastroenterologist directed her to the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation.

"When I was first diagnosed with Crohn's disease, I tried so many different treatments, was in and out of the hospital and felt very isolated," says Tolve. "When I visited the Foundation's Web site, I found other people with the disease and I was able to join online message groups and talk about what I was experiencing."

For almost four decades, the Foundation has provided trusted information and support services for the approximately 1.4 million Americans, like Tolve, living with Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis. Now the Foundation has launched an enhanced Web site and telephone hotline known as the Information Resource Center (IRC) to better serve patients, families, primary care providers and friends seeking disease information, treatment options and support. The goal is to raise awareness and provide educational materials about these diseases that affect many, but are



**People with Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis can call or log on for disease information.**

often not talked about openly.

"Diagnosis can be one of the greatest challenges for patients with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. Often, an accurate diagnosis can take three years or longer following the onset of symptoms," notes Dr. Balfour Sartor, the Foundation's Chief Medical Advisor. "Even after diagnosis, patients face a long road to the right treatment, many times fueled by a lack of education about their disease. The Foundation and new IRC aim to fill that void."

The IRC is accessed by either calling 1-888-MY-GUT-PAIN (888-694-8872) or visiting [www.cffa.org](http://www.cffa.org). In a time when more and more Americans are turning to the Internet for instant health information and when telephone recordings are the norm for most call centers, the value of credible disease resources both online and via a live conversation with an

expert cannot be discounted.

The IRC staffs public health educators and professionals with advanced degrees, who can answer questions via Web chats or telephone about everything from troubling symptoms to where one can find a support group specifically for parents and children with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. The IRC also has tools to help patients find a gastroenterologist or other patient education and awareness programs in their area. Plus, the Foundation offers interpretation services in 170 different languages for any of its resource materials.

"Providing meaningful education on living and coping with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis is essential in minimizing the effect of these diseases," says Dr. Sartor, "and there's no better source for a patient to begin that education than the Information Resource Center. We help patients find medical help and emotional support in their community. We can also be of particular help to those who may not know exactly what's wrong, but are experiencing symptoms of these diseases."

"Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis are not comfortable diseases to discuss and they are definitely hard to live with," concludes Tolve. "But the online and call-in resources provided by the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation allow patients, their families and friends to discuss these diseases openly and really feel that they aren't alone in this lifelong battle."