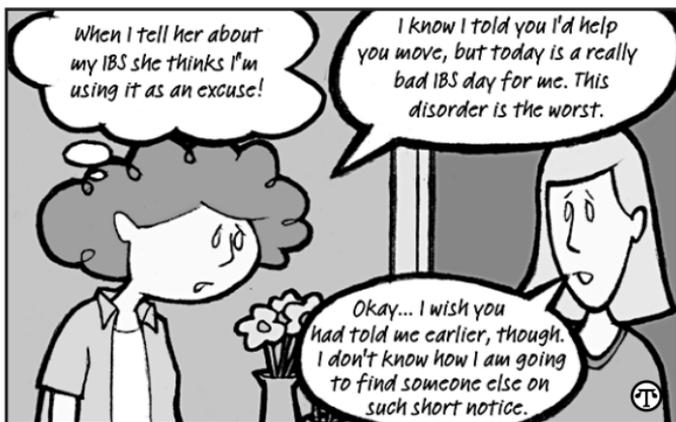




Put Suffering In Perspective

(NAPSA)—The merging of art and technology now provides a new outlet for self-expression for many IBS patients. Millions of Americans suffer with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), but few talk about the daily pain and discomfort caused by this all too common disorder.



The very private nature of this illness often keeps people from talking about their symptoms, even with a doctor, leaving them to endure this disorder in silence.

IBS is an often painful disorder affecting up to one in five Americans—that's more than 40 million people. Symptoms of IBS include abdominal pain, discomfort, bloating and altered bowel function (constipation, diarrhea or an alternating pattern of the two). Each year, IBS accounts for one of every 10 doctor visits, but patients leave without real treatment options, because there are no approved medications to treat the multiple symptoms of this disorder.

National Art Contest for IBS Patients

The "Perspectives on IBS" interactive art contest was created to encourage expression of the physical and emotional impact of living with IBS. The contest is featured online at www.IBSvillage.com, where contestants can add dialogue to illustrations of typical day-to-day encounters of IBS sufferers, such as calling in sick to work, canceling social plans, and talking to a doctor about their symptoms.

"Although IBS can significantly

diminish quality of life, many sufferers feel uncomfortable discussing the physical and emotional challenges related to this disorder," said John Johanson, MD, a gastroenterologist and IBS expert. "Many of my IBS patients complain of symptoms and are frustrated by lack of discussion about this disorder. 'Perspectives on IBS' allows people to share experiences and help others understand what it means to suffer with IBS."

IBSvillage.com is a unique online source of medical information and practical tips for people suffering from IBS that offers expert advice and tools to help track and manage symptoms. It also connects patients with a large community that understands what it's like to live with IBS and can offer support. This resource site is designed to help patients better cope with the challenges of IBS in their daily life.

Fifteen winners will be selected and each winner will receive \$500 worth of American Express Gift Cheques. Entry forms and contest rules can be found by visiting www.IBSvillage.com. The contest ends on March 15, 2002. "Perspectives on IBS" is sponsored by Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation.