



**Penny Povey** is a senior medical herbalist. She practises at Farmacia Urban Healing (0207 318 2365) and The Wyndham Centre (0207 935 5281).  
[www.pennypovey.com](http://www.pennypovey.com)

If you would like a **FREE** consultation with Penny, send your details to Emma Van Hinsbergh, 25 Phoenix Court, Hawkins Road, Colchester, CO2 8JY or email [emma.vanhinsbergh@aceville.co.uk](mailto:emma.vanhinsbergh@aceville.co.uk)

This month we sent 21-year-old student **Alexandra Tuthill** from Winchester, who suffers from digestive problems, to see the UK's leading medical herbalist **Penny Povey**



# HOLISTIC

## HEALTH CHECK



### What's the problem?

While travelling in South America, Alexandra developed severe diarrhoea and vomiting and became so dehydrated that she blacked out. When she returned to England, she was put on antibiotics and felt much better. However with the stress of university, the symptoms recurred. Because milk seemed to make her feel better, she drank gallons of it but then she developed nausea with stomach cramps, bloating, flatulence and diarrhoea. Tests revealed that she is severely lactose intolerant so she was given more antibiotics. Now she wakes feeling nauseous and as the day progresses she feels bloated and has stomach aches. She still has diarrhoea and Immodium doesn't help. As a consequence of these symptoms she has become run down.



### What Penny recommends:

To combat diarrhoea you need to have a diet consisting of soothing foods:

- Avoid coffee, alcohol and carbonated drinks as well as cold foods and drinks.
- Digestion is assisted by warmth, so try to cut out raw foods.
- Avoid dairy and try to eliminate beans, fats, wheat, whole nuts and seeds (ground up is okay), muesli, sweets and processed foods or any food suspected to be allergenic.
- Eat bananas, rice and cooked apples along with soups, well-cooked brown rice, cream of brown rice cereal, rice milk, and steamed vegetables. Although the diet should be high in fibre, wheat bran irritates the bowel.



### Try this:

The pulse test is sometimes used to see if reintroduction of a food increases your pulse rate.

- Make sure you are relaxed, then take your normal resting rate at the radial pulse on the inner wrist by counting the number of beats in a minute – usually around 70.
- Take your pulse several times over an hour to check that it does not fluctuate much. If it is quite stable, take it 10, 20, 40 and 60 minutes after ingesting a new food.
- A significant increase in pulse rate, especially if maintained, is generally taken to be an indicator of sensitivity.



### What's happening?

Diarrhoea is caused by hyperactivity of the bowel. It is a common symptom of gastroenteritis (inflammation of the gastrointestinal tract) or gastric flu. Gastroenteritis can develop into Irritable Bowel Syndrome, symptoms of which include uncomfortable flatulence and distension. Causes include stress, lack of digestive enzymes, spastic bowel tone and food intolerances particularly milk, gluten in wheat and other grains, oranges and coffee. A shift in the population of bowel flora in response to certain foods may also bring on symptoms.



- For protein, eat plenty of deep water white fish and organic meat. But remember, if you are intolerant to dairy you may be sensitive to other foods in the same family such as beef.
- Healing vegetables to eat are carrots, swede, parsnips, fennel, sweet potato, white potato, turnips, parsley, garlic, beetroot and sauerkraut.
- Drink chamomile, ginger and peppermint tea – combine these herbs, it tastes better.

## Alexandra's verdict...

I'm feeling a lot better – the herbal teas in particular made a big difference and Penny's dietary advice has really helped.



### Herbal healing

Try slippery elm, bentonite clay and citrus pectin to clean and soothe the colon. Meadowsweet, chamomile, barberry and echinacea ease inflammation and boost immunity.