

"Nothing slows me down"

Amy King, 44, battled fatigue and GI issues for years—until she discovered the surprisingly common culprit and the natural cures that changed everything

"What do you mean you can't make it? There are going to be 50 people here and they'll be so disappointed if you don't show up," the event organizer pleaded. But as much as Amy didn't want to let anyone down, she felt she had no choice. "For weeks, I had been scheduled to present my poetry," Amy explains. "I hadn't presented it in a while because I'd been too tired, so this was an important event. I thought I could handle it. But as I got off the train on my way to the venue, I knew I didn't have the energy to get through it. So I called to cancel. I felt awful backing out last-minute, and I profusely apologized before catching the next train home. As I drifted off in my seat, I wondered, *What is happening to me?*

Utterly depleted

"Seven years ago, fatigue caused me to back out on commitments more often than I care to admit, from holiday celebrations to fun nights out. Once, I had tickets to see a concert with a friend I hadn't seen in a while, and I was excited to catch up with her. Since I'd be sitting all night, I thought I'd be okay, but when I arrived at the show, I was too drained to even walk to my seat. So I went home. Eventually, some of my friends got so fed up with my cancellations that they stopped calling me altogether.

"It wasn't just fatigue that was dragging me down. I also had frequent bouts of bloat, diarrhea and nausea. I rarely had an appetite, and when I did eat, I got awful stomachaches. Foods that never

bothered me before now made me sick. I even had to go to the emergency room a few times because I was so dehydrated from the diarrhea.

"Over the course of a year, I saw countless doctors, including four gastroenterologists, an allergist, two cardiologists and my ob/gyn, but no one could figure out what was wrong with me. I was diagnosed with everything from irritable bowel syndrome to *Brugada Syndrome* (a sometimes-fatal heart-rhythm disorder). One doctor said my symptoms were related to anxiety and depression and prescribed medications, which I refused to take because I knew that wasn't really my problem. Since I didn't agree with any of my doctors, I was told I was a difficult patient. But deep down, I knew there had to be another reason I was feeling so bad.

Answers at last

"Instead of wasting more time seeing doctors, I decided to take matters into my own hands. After I researched my symptoms online, I wrote down every single one of the potential culprits I

One-minute QUIZ

IS AN ENERGY-SAPPING BACTERIA MAKING YOU TIRED?

If you experience daytime fatigue and two or more of the symptoms below, you may be infected with *H. pylori*

- Nausea
- Anxiety
- Severe stomach pain or ulcers
- Bloat
- Depression
- Loss of appetite
- Sinus infections

Amy King,
Syosset, NY



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found, including *Helicobacter pylori*, a bacterial infection that can cause fatigue and GI symptoms.

“Then I went back to my primary care physician and gave her a list of things to test for, including *H. pylori*. And it’s a good thing I did: A blood test showed that I had the antibodies for *H. pylori*, and a stool test showed the infection was active. My doctor explained that because of the infection, I wasn’t digesting food or getting enough nutrients, and that was depleting my energy. I was so relieved to finally have an answer.

“I immediately started to research the condition, and I learned that treatment for an *H. pylori* infection typically involves taking a ton of antibiotics. I read that it could take up to three rounds of the drugs to cure the infection, so I decided to get my doctor’s opinion. She said antibiotics were the way to go and prescribed two types, but it turned out I was allergic to the antibiotics.

“I knew there had to be a natural alternative, so I did more research and learned about a few different things that could help: Manuka honey (it has antibiotic properties that kill bacteria in the stomach lining), mastic gum (it’s derived from the mastic tree and was used by the Greeks for digestive problems) and *monolaurin* (a compound in coconut milk that is used to treat infections). I decided to combine all of them—something I called

the 3M approach. Every day, I took a spoonful of Manuka honey 20 minutes before each meal and again before bedtime, plus 2 capsules of mastic gum and 1,000 mg of monolaurin daily. I also took a high-potency probiotic that my doctor gave me to replenish the beneficial bacteria in my gut.

“When I learned that *H. pylori* bacteria feed on sugar, I temporarily eliminated all sugar from my diet, including fruit, carbs, alcohol and coffee. Instead, I made soups with organic chicken and green vegetables and drank tea. Later, I added gut-soothing foods like shrimp, avocado and oatmeal. Eventually, I added sugar back, including an occasional glass of wine or a slice of cake.

“Within a month, most of my energy had returned and my GI symptoms had almost vanished. By two months, I felt completely healed and my doctor confirmed that the infection was gone. I was shocked that despite this infection wreaking havoc on my life for so long, it only took a few simple solutions to remedy it.

“Today, instead of canceling events and missing out on fun, I’m busier than ever spending time with friends, traveling and presenting my poetry. I finally have my life back and it couldn’t be better!”

—as told to Julie Revelant

Alert!

52% of migraine sufferers have this infection

When scientists tested 105 migraine sufferers for *H. pylori*, they found that 52 percent carried the bacteria. Previous studies suggest that as the body tries to fight off the bacteria, the immune system triggers the release of chemicals that constrict blood vessels leading to the brain, causing a headache. If you suffer from migraines, consider asking your doctor for a urea breath test. If it’s positive, the strategies at right can help you recover from an infection and cut down on head pain.

90% OF WOMEN with *H. pylori* go undiagnosed

! “*H. pylori* is one of the most common infections worldwide,” says Russell Dean Havranek, M.D., of the Gastroenterology Clinic of San Antonio. It affects up to 40 percent of Americans, and while the exact cause is unknown, experts believe it may be the result of consuming contaminated food or water, or coming into contact with saliva from an infected person. Yet despite the prevalence, few doctors think to test for the bacteria, so up to 90 percent of women go undiagnosed.

! **Risk of *H. pylori* infection rises with every birthday.** Winston Cardwell, N.D., a naturopathic physician at Atlanta Integrative Medicine, explains, “As you age, the stomach’s production of hydrochloric acid [HCl], which protects against infection, declines.”

✓ **Your doctor can diagnose *H. pylori* with a urea breath test.** Standard treatment is “triple therapy”: two antibiotics and a proton pump inhibitor, says Barry Marshall, an *H. pylori* expert in Australia. But many women also use natural remedies, like below, with great success.

😊 **Take probiotics.** Cardwell advises choosing a brand with *L. rhamnosus* LGG and *Bifidobacterium* BB-12, which have been shown to ward off infection as well as to make “triple therapy” 21 percent more effective. Try: Usana Probiotic (\$30 for 14 servings, Usana.com).

😊 **Try the 3M strategy:** Consume 1 to 2 Tbs. a day of Manuka honey and supplement with *monolaurin* (like Lauricidin Monolaurin, \$35 for 75 servings, Lauricidin.com) and mastic gum (like Source Naturals Mastic Gum, \$30 for 60 capsules, iHerb.com). All three are proven to help kill *H. pylori*.

😊 **Also smart:** Taking ½ tsp. of apple cider vinegar mixed in 4 oz. of water before meals, which Cardwell says boosts HCl to protect against *H. pylori*.