

THE MAIL ON SUNDAY 17 JULY 2005

# VOU

MAGAZINE



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# SEX IN THE CITY

SUMMER DRESSING FOR  
GIRLS ABOUT TOWN



SARAH STACEY

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Illustration NILA AYE

# BANISH GUT FEELINGS

Long-term gut problems, including irritable bowel syndrome and ulcerative colitis, affect many people nowadays. According to Professor Nick Read, medical adviser to the IBS Network, the underlying cause of these medically unexplained illnesses is often primarily psychological: 'A lot of emotional activity seems to go on in the gut. Ongoing symptoms often stem from emotional situations that aren't being addressed.'

One 26-year-old man was diagnosed with ulcerative colitis at 21, after he broke up with a long-standing girlfriend and was about to change jobs. Although he had a course of steroid-based drugs, the big change came when he learned to relax. He told me: 'I took a good look at myself and realised that I was worrying far too much about work and money. I really feel it's a matter of being calm.'

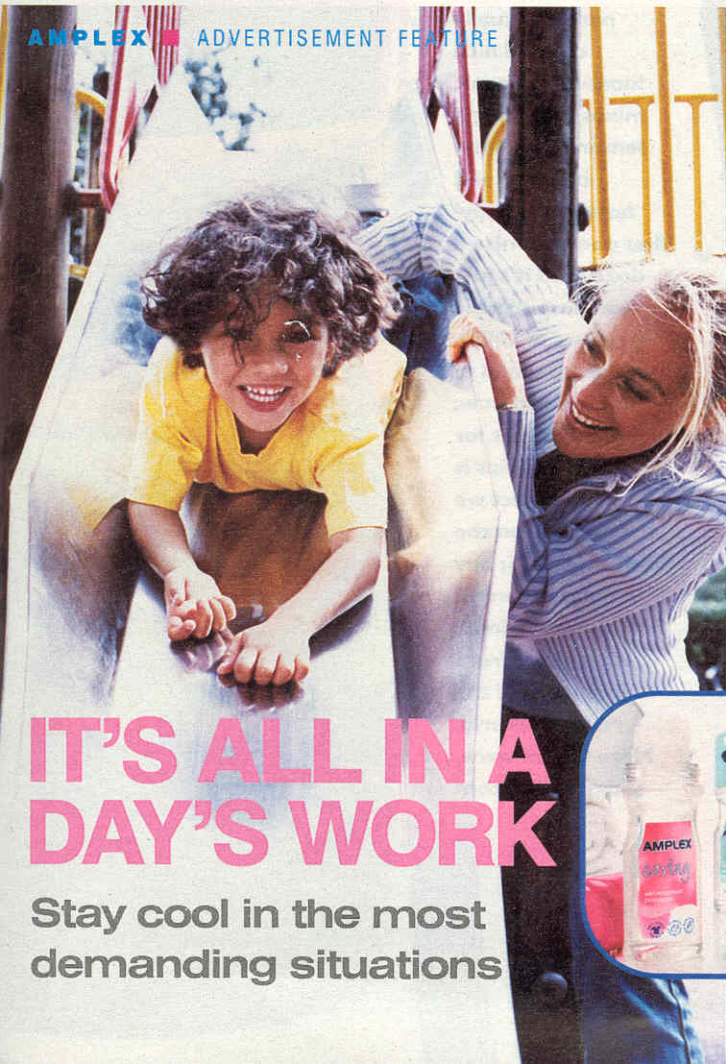
Professor Read says he is in favour of 'a judicious mixture' of scientific medicine and complementary therapies, and he believes patients often respond best to healing techniques. If your gut is grumpy, however, you may need something extra. Several readers who have suffered from IBS for years

have found that probiotic foods (Actimel by Danone is often cited) or supplements soothe their guts, enabling them to calm down, too. One woman dates her IBS back to heavy-duty antibiotic treatment for a stomach ulcer; she admits she's also a worrier with a stress-filled life. Her worst attacks happened on holiday: 'A break in Italy last year was ruined by my stomach bloating and my guts turning to water. I spent the whole time rushing to the loo.'

Advised that the antibiotics might have upset the bacterial balance in her bowel, she tried Primal Defense (£48.50 for 180 caplets, two months' supply, Garden of Life, tel: 0845 800 1062, [www.chrisbar.com](http://www.chrisbar.com)), which contains high-dose lactobacillus. She adds: 'Since starting a daily dose in January, I haven't had a single IBS incident, plus my skin is better.' *Gut Week, which aims to raise awareness of digestive health, starts tomorrow. Helpline: 020 8743 4287 ([www.gutweek.org.uk](http://www.gutweek.org.uk))*



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