

TO: Tom Perez, M.P.H.

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I am writing in support of Lotronex. My symptoms began at age 25 when I began suffering cramping and diarrhea. During this seige, I was referred to internists who poked and probed, who performed all the invasive tests, who put me on special diets, who prescribed Librax and OTC drugs. The symptoms continued for a 5 month period. I lost more than 20 lbs. during that time, due to the diarrhea and the special diets.

I am now 60 years old, and have been plagued with IBS for 35 years, sometimes more intensely than others. Throughout years of intestinal discomfort, anxiety and curtailment of normal activities (i.e. getting to work on time, commuting by bus, morning group hikes or bike rides, significant social events, grocery shopping, etc.) I have tried biofeedback, yoga, therapy, and yet more invasive testing and failed treatments that various MDs had to offer me. IBS has put definite limits and restrictions on my life. All this changed one day when I learned about Lotronex at the office of a gastroenterologist who had performed the FDA trials locally. Immediately, I had a new lease on life! I was FREE...Free to act and feel like a normal person, without the restrictions that imprison IBS sufferers. My gastroenterologist stayed in contact with me, answering my questions, making me aware of the side effects of constipation and the remedies, and making recommendations about the dosage (although I knew my body better than anyone). I needed less than the recommended dose and for the first few weeks I took Colace (a stool softener) along with the Lotronex. Fortunately, I am married to an MD who knows and understands my symptoms well, and could make suggestions. He was also delighted with the change: no more rushing to find a bathroom on a car trip, no more cancelling of activities due to discomfort, no more anxiety about "can I or can't I" do this or that. I was able to eat healthier, tolerate more foods, and maintain my weight. I did not have to plan my evening meal around my following day activities. I did not need to carry Pepto-Bismol and Immodium with me. I was a NEW PERSON for 7 months! And then the bomb fell: Lotronex was pulled. Through my personal contacts with the medical community, I was able to gather samples that would have been discarded. They have been like gold to me and I dole them out only when I am at my worst. I no longer feel FREE or NORMAL. My greatest fear is that when they are all gone, and that will be soon, I will again become a prisoner to IBS. I have known both lives: "before-Lotronex" and "after-Lotronex". I choose "after". Wouldn't you? Thank you for listening. Sandy Williams, CA

*Sandy Williams*