

Kimberley Mack – founder of the Aloe Vera Clinic in Whitley Bay

As a lifelong sufferer of Crohn's disease, my illness began in my late teens and remained chronic until my late twenties, before, due to my own research, I finally made a breakthrough. Crohn's is a serious inflammatory bowel disease that causes chronic pain and a weak bowel. Due to my condition, my life was drastically limited. Eating out was impossible and I suffered from very low energy, I was very underweight and had very cold feet and hands due to bad circulation.

At the age of 17, I had a part of my colon removed, which was quite a big operation. For the next 8-9 years, I was taking ongoing prescribed medication including steroids and anti-inflammatory tablets to help manage my condition. However, the medical profession never gave me advice on how to manage my diet. I would have attacks approximately once per year which would leave me hospital-bound for up to at least a week, and where I would have to be fed intravenously as my body was unable to accept food.

In 1988, I had another section of my bowel removed, which came with the fear of losing the bowel altogether. This was the turning point. I was in my late twenties and I decided I had had enough of relying solely on the orthodox system. I began seeking alternative methods of treatment to help ease and also improve not just the disease itself but also my general health and well-being. I realised I couldn't live on steroids for the rest of my life.

My quest began with a visit to a nutritionist, who showed me in just one hour, how I was self-inflicting a lot of my discomfort with the food and drink I was consuming. This had never been questioned before. This included coffee, cheese, wheat, fast food etc. Being so underweight and low in energy, I craved sugar, and because I was underweight, didn't think it was a problem.

After working with my nutritionist for six months, I felt so in control of my body and the disease, it was almost impossible to believe. With food changes and specialised nutrition, my life changed completely. This gave me the confidence to go out, eat at restaurants and simply live my life normally for the first time in ten years.

It was at this point that I travelled to Australia where I discovered Aloe Vera. This was another turning point, as, since it is a natural inflammatory, and contains many essential nutrients and amino acids, it helped to keep my body in balance. Until I saw my nutritionist, my body was starved of the correct nutrients it needed. I began to learn more about the power of good quality foods, plants and botanicals.

I carried on to the States and began working in a natural health clinic where the benefits of alternative therapies such as colonics, acupuncture and reflexology as well as nutrition all assisted in keeping me well. I learned here that the emotional really does affect the physical. I began working with Louise Hay which was yet another critical point as it made me see how the disease may have manifested itself in the first place.

Following a serious car accident in the States, I returned to the UK in 1991 to recover. At this point, I had managed three years without any form of orthodox medication. Following my recovery, I continued working in the natural health industry and, in 1994, began studying Macrobiotics and the benefits of food in health for one year.

In 1995, I founded the Aloe Vera Centre in Whitley Bay offering the highest grade products and ongoing advice to those wishing to look and feel the best they can naturally. I also exhibited at many natural health shows around the country to spread the word to those who were sick and seeking natural alternatives about how nutrition and alternative health in general could help. Today, my clinic is going stronger than ever.

I am no longer a victim of Crohn's although I still have the disease. I always asked myself the question, 'what am I doing that is making me feel unwell?' As a result of my search for a solution, I found the answer that quite literally transformed my life. My nutritionist gave me control back over my own body.

Since I opened my clinic, I have learned that many people are looking for a quick fix. I teach them that this is not the answer – it's about a lifestyle change that is ongoing. My clinic helps people with minor to serious conditions, enabling them to regain control of their lives with natural products. We have seen quite literally hundreds of people regain health and happiness and many I still work together with ten years on.

I specialise in digestive and bowel problems as well as inflammation. Often, we find that clients who come for a headache, for instance, have a digestive problem. The orthodox system may have been treating them for days, weeks and even months for a headache and not ever considering the root cause.