

# Digestive Health



**Problem:** Recent studies show that [72% of people](#) in the U.S. experience gastrointestinal (GI) symptoms more than a few times per month, but only [1 in 4 are diagnosed](#).



Over 700 related ICD-10 codes, which means digestive disease is likely to be a top five condition for most employers when looking at medical and pharmacy costs

- [40% of U.S. population](#) claim their daily lives are disrupted by GI issues – with [13 missed work days for IBS](#) and [17 for IBD](#)
- [More people in U.S. are hospitalized](#) with digestive disease than any other condition
- Digestive disease was the [second-most common type of short-term disability claim](#) in 2020



**Value:** Treating members with digestive health conditions can reduce overall population healthcare costs for employers. It can also improve employee health, longevity, productivity, and engagement.

## Employers are increasingly focused on digestive health

Highlights from the [WTW 2023 Best Practices in Healthcare Survey](#) specific to digestive health (survey included 457 employers)

- 15% of employers took action in 2023
- Another 6% planning for 2024
- With the largest growth of 16% of employers considering deploying a digestive health solution in 2025

To learn more →

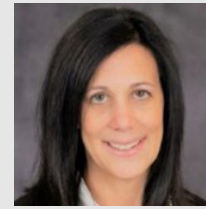


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We've been watching the impact of digestive health conditions as a top-5 cost category. Because of the interconnected and individualized nature of digestive conditions, we've seen that the best way to change these population healthcare costs at scale is by offering personalized, multidisciplinary medical care for a full spectrum of conditions and acuity.



**Christina Prosser,**  
WTW Digestive Health  
Practice Leader

## How WTW can help

We work with employers to educate them on the impact of digestive health on the population. WTW can provide:

- Digestive dashboard — looking at pharmacy and medical costs for the top 700 + ICD-10 codes to fully assess cost and impact
- Vendor showcase day — provide brief presentations with up to 5 vendors to better understand their capabilities in this space
- Vendor client roundtables — brainstorming session to learn more about vendor capabilities and client experiences
- Vendor RFPs — WTW will help to assess and select the right vendor partner based on employer goals and objectives
- Implementation support — after selection of a vendor, WTW can provide support with launching the selected vendor
- Digestive Health Care Condition guide — WTW to develop a custom guide for intranet site, based on employer's current vendor ecosystem, including other clinical resources

GI conditions  
cost the  
healthcare  
system

**\$136**  
Billion each year

## Assessing your population needs

### GI conditions affect 1 in 4 and are costing you more than heart disease and mental health

Digestive conditions are inherently complex, with hundreds of GI conditions, marked by overlaying conditions, complicated comorbidities, and interdependent mental health conditions. Symptoms usually begin at a young age and disproportionately affect females. While proven interventions exist, they are not widely available or reimbursed — driving costly escalations within the system.

#### IBD

Crohn's disease & T. ulcerative colitis

High Acuity



#### IBS

Irritable bowel syndrome

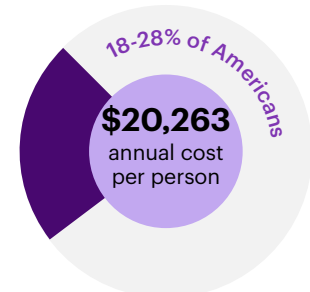
Acuity Ranges



#### GERD

Gastro-esophageal reflux disease

High Acuity



Source: Merative MarketScan Commercial Database. Analysis on population ages 18-65 in partnership with actuarial analytics firm Accorded



**Undiagnosed conditions affect approximately 100,000,000 Americans**



**Gaps in Diagnosis**

- Condition overlays and comorbidities frequently lead to no diagnosis
- Misdiagnosis common due to limited definitive testing
- Diagnosis of exclusion — requires years of testing without assurance
- Many give up due to frustration with getting diagnosis



**Avoidable cost drivers**

- Expensive medications, such as biologics and IBS medications
- Procedures (e.g., endoscopies) and surgeries
- Imaging and testing
- Uncontrolled symptoms drive high ER utilization

During the diagnostic journey and while finding the right treatment, your employees are struggling, missing work, and relying on urgent care and emergent options to treat flares. In GI, patients — your employees — are driving the utilization within the system because they are acutely feeling their symptoms every day. This leads to prolonged suffering and cost which is largely avoidable.

**The typical diagnostic journey is 2-3 years long**



## Hundreds of GI conditions

Beyond the most common primary diagnoses of IBD, IBS and GERD, there are actually hundreds of treatable GI and related conditions that cause distress.



### Autoimmune & inflammatory

- Celiac disease
- Eosinophilic esophagitis (EOE)
- Eosinophilic gastritis
- Microscopic colitis
- Collagenous colitis
- Lymphocytic colitis
- Gastritis
- Chronic pancreatitis



### Motility & gut-brain disorders

- Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)
- Functional dyspepsia
- Functional dysphagia
- Gastroparesis
- Cyclic vomiting syndrome
- Cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome
- Rumination syndrome
- Pelvic floor dysfunction
- Defecation disorder
- Fecal incontinence (encopresis)



### Undiagnosed conditions & symptoms

- Dietary intolerances
- Gluten sensitivity
- Fructose, lactose, sucrose intolerance
- Constipation
- Diarrhea
- Gas & bloating
- Abdominal pain & dyspepsia
- Blood in stool
- Iron deficiency anemia
- Vitamin deficiencies



### Structural disorders

- Hemorrhoids
- Diverticular disease
- Gallbladder & biliary disease
- Hiatal hernia
- Pancreatic conditions
- Peptic ulcer disease
- Rectal prolapse



### Esophageal

- GERD
- Reflux & heartburn
- Barrett's esophagus
- Achalasia & esophageal motility disorders
- Dysphagia (difficulty swallowing)
- Odynophagia (pain with swallowing)



### Liver

- Nonalcoholic fatty liver disease
- Nonalcoholic steatohepatitis
- Hepatitis
- Drug-induced liver injury
- Cirrhosis



### Infections

- Small intestinal bacterial over-growth
- Helicobacter pylori
- Bacterial, viral, parasitic, fungal infections
- Viral hepatitis



### Screening

- Colon cancer
- Liver cancer
- Esophageal cancer
- Gastric cancer



### Other

- Management of total parenteral nutrition (TPN) and IV fluids

### Oshi Health digestive health pilot

Oshi Health launched pilots with three WTW employer partners between February and April 2022. Oshi has demonstrated strong results across all pilots in key success factors nine months after its launch.

- **4.9/5** member satisfaction score
- **\$437K** in GI-related savings (**\$6.9K**/member)
- **94%** of members achieved symptom improvement and control

### Oshi Health: High-touch virtual GI center of excellence

The Oshi care model is a phased approach that speeds time to diagnosis, treatment, and symptom control.

#### 1. Assessment & diagnosis

Through intake and preliminary diagnosis, Oshi solves the issues of many. For others, Oshi's care team medically qualifies members who need whole-person therapy

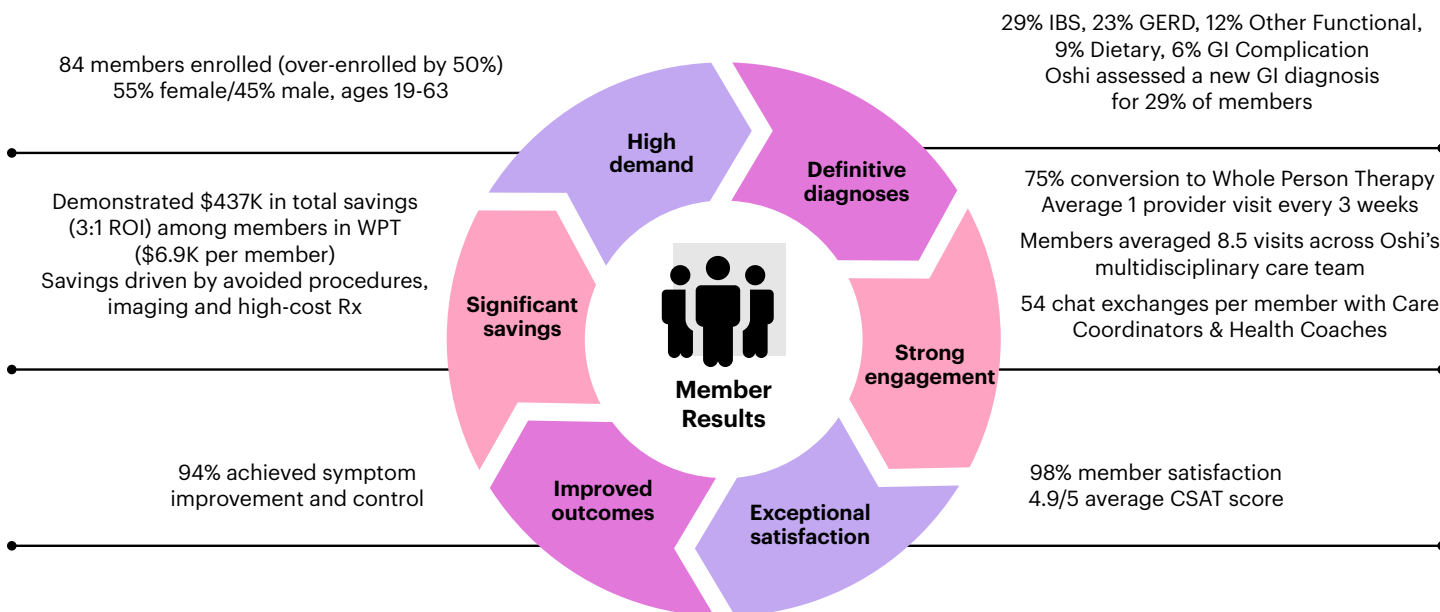
#### 2. Whole-person therapy (WPT)

Unlimited appointments with **GI-specialized dietitians, behavioral health providers, health coaches, and GI providers** until symptom control achieved

- 24x7 phone & messaging support
- Dietary & gut-brain trigger identification
- Collaboration with in-person care and other benefits

## Oshi Health pilot summary

The Oshi Health digestive health pilots' unequivocal success resulted in expanded rollouts for all three employer partners to capitalize on successful outcomes and to drive further savings for employee populations and adult dependents suffering from gastrointestinal symptoms and conditions.



### What 98% member satisfaction sounds like

- "I felt heard and the plan made moving forward acknowledged the problems I have. It gave me hope that my health has the possibility of improving as I follow the direction given me."
- "Everyone is so helpful and caring. It's unlike anywhere else I've been."
- "Every session provided more insight and tools to prevent my GI issues from occurring. Highly recommend this team!"
- "My provider was awesome! She did a great job at helping me understand the next steps and how to implement diet changes."
- "I'm a healed man! My gut feels great and all the diarrhea and constipation are gone. I haven't felt this good in years!"

#### About WTW

At WTW (NASDAQ: WTW), we provide data-driven, insight-led solutions in the areas of people, risk and capital. Leveraging the global view and local expertise of our colleagues serving 140 countries and markets, we help you sharpen your strategy, enhance organizational resilience, motivate your workforce and maximize performance. Working shoulder to shoulder with you, we uncover opportunities for sustainable success — and provide perspective that moves you. Learn more at [wtwco.com](https://www.wtwco.com).



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