

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) is a chronic disorder affecting the gastrointestinal tract. Symptoms include abdominal pain, gassiness, abdominal bloating, and bowel movements often fluctuating between constipation and diarrhea. Patients with IBS can also have predominant constipation or predominant diarrhea.

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) does not cause nighttime symptoms, unexplained weight loss, rectal bleeding, or iron deficiency anemia. It is a diagnosis of exclusion, meaning that other disorders such as Crohn's disease, Ulcerative Colitis, and Celiac sprue should be ruled out.

Dietary modifications are often helpful. Gas producing foods such as beans, cauliflower, broccoli, cabbage, brussel sprouts, carrots, onions, celery, beans, raisins, bananas, apricots, prunes, wheat germ, pretzels, bagels, alcohol, caffeine, and carbonated beverages are often eliminated from diet. Seventy percent of us are lactose-intolerant; a lactose-free diet can be helpful. There are tests that can be performed to help identify allergens, such as breath testing and labwork.

A low FODMAP diet (fermentable oligo, di-, and monosaccharides and polyols) can eliminate excessive gas, pain and abdominal bloating. A low FODMAP diet consists of eliminating fructose (apples, pears, honey), lactose (chocolate, milk, cottage cheese), fructans (wheat, garlic, onions), galactans (beans, lentils, soybeans), and polyols (apricots, sweeteners).

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) patients who lean towards constipation may benefit from increased fiber, including psyllium, 1-3 tablespoons daily. Miralax, 17 grams daily also has benefit. Prescriptive medications are also used for constipation-predominant IBS.

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IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME



IBS DIET

Foods to Avoid:

- Lactose/Milk based products (milk, ice cream, cream cheese, cheese, chocolate, yogurt, cream soups, butter, pudding, cheesecake, and other rich pastries, whipped cream topping, cream, half-n-half, sherbet.
- Caffeinated beverages including coffee, tea, soda; diet beverages, including artificial sweeteners.
- Foods containing preservatives, such as fruit cocktail, canned soup, sausage, smoked fish; avoid additives such as sodium benzoate, sodium nitrate, and food dyes.
- Any food/beverage containing alcohol (beer, wine, whiskey, champagne, rum cake.
- Fruits, especially fresh citrus, including apple juice/cider, orange juice, tomato juice, V-8.
- Spices/seasons such as curry powder, garlic, paprika, chili powder, oregano, thyme, marjoram, excess salt/pepper, onions, peppers, fried foods.
- Salad dressings, particularly those with mayonnaise, cheese, spices, croutons.
- Red meats (steak, hamburger, bacon, prime rib, etc.).
- Nuts, peanuts, popcorn, and corn. Foods containing high fiber/bran content.
- Gravies/sauces (spaghetti sauce, turkey gravy).
- Whole grain/multi-grain breads, sourdough breads and bagels.

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) patients who have diarrhea can benefit from over the counter anti-diarrheals.

Pharmacologic agents called “anti-spasmodic” medications are often used for moderate to severe IBS symptoms, which have a “calming” effect on the gut. Some antibiotics can also be used periodically for suspected small bowel bacterial overgrowth. Physical activity, 60 minutes 3-5 days a week, has overall benefit including reducing symptoms associated with IBS. Lifestyle modifications such as relaxation techniques (yoga, meditation, acupuncture) may also improve quality of life. Exercise does not need to be overly strenuous and may include simply walking around the block. Exercise not only reduces stress but also improves colonic motility (the way your colon works).

Probiotics taken once daily are good bacteria. Studies have shown overall benefit in terms of colon health. Probiotics alter the bacterial flora, showing improvement in digestion, decreased IBS symptoms, and even help prevent both constipation and diarrhea. Probiotics have also been shown to prevent flares in regards to Crohn’s disease and Ulcerative Colitis. Increase daily water intake; it is recommended that you drink 8 – 10 glasses of water a day. Your colon is basically a storage area of water. When the body

is dehydrated, it will pull water from the colon back into the blood stream, which leads to constipation. In addition, bacteria in the colon will have much more time to digest carbohydrates. It is very important that you avoid and/or eliminate caffeine and carbonation. Caffeine is a diuretic and will actually allow water to be lost through the bladder, rather than to be held within the colon.

Eat a low fat/high fiber diet: Data shows that less than 90% of Americans do not get adequate fiber in their diet. Daily recommendations for fiber intake include 25 grams of fiber for females and 30 grams of fiber for males. Fiber may be soluble or insoluble. Fiber comes from anything that grows in the ground. Good sources of fiber include whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and beans. Fiber holds water within the colon allowing for more efficient stool transit, reduction of constipation and/or diarrhea, as well as reduction of gas. Fiber supplements are an excellent way to insure that you are getting enough fiber on a daily basis. Consider Metamucil Clear and Natural or Benefiber. A single scoop of the supplement will add an additional 5 grams of fiber to your diet. They dissolve completely in water without any taste and may be used in cooking as well.

Over the counter products that contain Simethicone, such as antacids, Maalox Anti-Gas, Mylanta Gas, Gas-X, Beano, Phazyme, help to relieve gas bubbles.