



Irritable Bowel Syndrome

Did You Know?

Think you may have IBS? Talk to your doctor about your symptoms, and consider seeing a gastroenterologist for diagnosis and treatment options.

If you are having trouble managing your diet and stress with irritable bowel syndrome, it may help to see a Registered Dietitian (RD). He or she can help you identify foods you tolerate, and create an eating plan to improve your health and nutrition. Ask your doctor or visit eatright.org to find an RD near you.



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Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a common condition that includes a group of unpleasant symptoms that may occur often, but do not cause damage to the intestines.

The most common types are:

- *IBS with diarrhea (IBS-D)*
- *IBS with constipation (IBS-C)*
- *Mixed IBS (IBS-M)*

Symptoms usually include abdominal pain, bloating, or cramping plus:

- Diarrhea
- Constipation
- Alternating diarrhea and constipation

Even though the symptoms do not cause damage to the intestines, they can cause a lot of pain, stress, and anxiety. Some people may experience a fear of eating, or avoidance of food in certain situations, which can lead to nutritional deficiencies. Too much diarrhea can cause dehydration, and IBS can also interfere with a person's ability to work, travel, and socialize.

Manage your IBS by:

- Keeping a log of your diet and symptoms to help identify foods that cause problems.
- Avoiding caffeine, nicotine, and foods high in fat and sugar.
- Making an effort to decrease stress in your life, and learning how to better cope with stress you cannot avoid.
- Increasing physical activity in ways that are comfortable for you. This can also help relieve stress.
- Avoiding overeating. Large amounts of even "safe" foods can cause problems for those with IBS.

For more specific ideas, see [Managing IBS with Diet and Lifestyle](#)