

What are the symptoms of IBS?

Sound Familiar?

You are a relatively healthy person; then one day you begin to suffer intermittent cramps in your lower abdomen. You have bowel movements more than usual. Your stools are watery, loose, possibly containing mucus. Sometimes you feel bloated and full of gas.

IBS symptoms are the SECOND most common cause of workplace absenteeism, after the common cold.

Food For Thought

Certain medicines and foods trigger spasms in some people. Chocolate, dairy products, or large amounts of alcohol are frequent offenders. Some people are also intolerant to certain dairy substances and develop bloating and diarrhea—for example, lactose, fructose, or sorbitol. The symptoms of lactose intolerance can overlap with those of IBS. Caffeine causes your stool to loosen, but is more likely to affect those with IBS. Bran, wheat fiber and fat may also increase IBS symptoms.

CU Healthy

HCS wants to CU Healthy! The Health Promotion Team at HCS tries to achieve this through our:

- Resource Centre
- Student Peer Interns
- Health Promotion Advisory Committee
- Website (carleton.ca/health)
- Facebook page
- Newsletters, class presentations, workshops and more . . .

The Health Promotion Team promotes healthy lifestyles and wellness and can provide you with information about stress, colds, nutrition, sexuality, alcohol, etc. Contact the Resource Centre for more information at 613-520-2600 ext. 6544 or cu_healthy@carleton.ca.



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Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)



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What is IBS

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a common intestinal disorder. It is a disturbance of the intestinal tract with symptoms that include abdominal discomfort and abnormal bowel movements. Diarrhea may often alternate with constipation, while pain and bloating may be relieved by a bowel movement.

IBS affects 10%-15% of otherwise healthy adults in North America, with women being twice as likely as men to experience it.

What causes IBS?

IBS is known as a functional disorder. There is no direct cause of the syndrome. Symptoms appear to be caused by SPASM of your bowel muscles. Everybody has bowel spasms, however people who have IBS have them more frequently. This results from increased sensitivity within the bowel to almost anything: **eating, stress, emotional arousal or flatulence.**

How to treat IBS

First, evaluate your eating habits and levels of stress. Try to increase dietary fibre and avoid foods that trigger your symptoms. Also, remember to drink at least 8 glasses of fluid per day.

- **Stress and Emotion**

Stress is known to stimulate colon spasms in people with IBS, as intestines are partly controlled by the nervous system. Proper rest and exercise can help reduce stress levels and help with IBS.

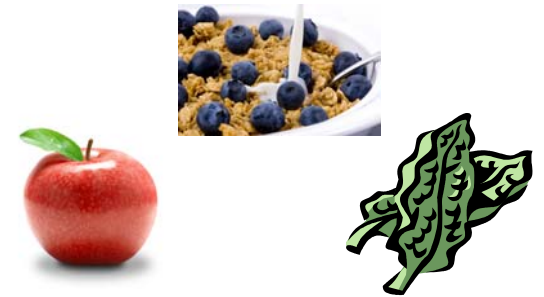


- **Diet**

Changing diets may help with IBS. Avoid caffeine, nicotine, alcohol and dietary fats. Pay attention to which foods trigger your IBS and avoid them. This may vary from person to person.

- **Fiber**

Adding bran or another natural fiber source, such as green leafy vegetables and apples, and also psyllium in Metamucil, can help to relieve the constipation associated with IBS.



When to seek medical attention

Although as many as **one in five** American adults has signs and symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome, **fewer than half** seek medical help.

It is important to see your doctor if you have a change in bowel habits that persists for several weeks, or if you have any other signs or symptoms of IBS,