

Irritable Bowel Syndrome

What is irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)?



Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a disorder of the intestines. It causes belly pain, cramping or bloating, and diarrhea or constipation. Irritable bowel syndrome is a long-term problem, but there are things you can do to reduce your symptoms.

Your symptoms may be worse or better from day to day, but your IBS will not get worse over time. IBS does not cause more serious diseases, such as inflammatory bowel disease or cancer.

What causes IBS?

Doctors do not know exactly what causes irritable bowel syndrome. In IBS, the movement of the digestive tract does not work as it should, but there is no sign of changes in the intestines, such as inflammation or tumors. Doctors think that IBS symptoms are related to problems with the signals sent between the brain and the intestines. This causes problems with the way the muscles of the intestines move.

For some people with IBS, certain foods, stress, hormonal changes, and some antibiotics may trigger pain and other symptoms.

What are the symptoms?

The main symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome are belly pain with constipation or diarrhea. Other common symptoms are bloating, mucus in the stools, or a feeling that you have not completely emptied your bowels.

Many people with IBS go back and forth between having constipation and having diarrhea. For most people, one of these happens more often than the other.

IBS is quite common. Most people's symptoms are so mild that they never see a doctor for treatment. But some people may have troublesome symptoms, especially stomach cramps, bloating, and diarrhea.

How is IBS diagnosed?

Most of the time, doctors can diagnose irritable bowel syndrome from the symptoms. Your doctor will ask you about your symptoms and past health and will do a physical exam.

In some cases, you may need other tests, such as stool analysis or a sigmoidoscopy. A sigmoidoscopy lets a doctor look at the inside of the lower part of the intestine (the large intestine or colon). These tests can help your doctor rule out other problems that might be causing your symptoms.

How is it treated?

Treatment usually includes making changes in your diet and lifestyle, such as avoiding foods that trigger your symptoms, getting regular exercise, and managing your stress.

There are also medicines that may help with your symptoms. If diet and lifestyle changes do not help enough on their own, your doctor may prescribe medicines for pain, diarrhea, or constipation.

**If you would like more information, please contact
Med-Cert, Inc. at 866-633-2378 (toll free) or at www.medcertinc.com**



MED-CERT
Medical Management Resources
Guiding your way to better health management