

# The IBS System

## DESCRIPTION

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) involves intestinal dysfunction without physiological abnormalities. Although the exact cause of IBS is unknown, there seems to be an underlying abnormality with regard to the contractions of the bowel.

## CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

Because traditional medicine has been unable to identify an organic cause for IBS, emphasis has typically been placed on psychological factors, as implied by the term “intestinal neurosis” once used to describe the condition. Certainly stress can aggravate and even trigger symptoms of IBS, but there are also other important factors involved.

The colon of an IBS sufferer seems to be more sensitive and reactive to stimulation than that of most people. Intestinal spasms may be the result of eating certain foods; abdominal distention caused by gas; and even emotional stress. While these factors may not cause undue gastrointestinal (GI) distress in the average person, they can trigger painful abdominal spasms for the IBS sufferer.

Other factors that appear to play a role in IBS include hormonal changes (women often experience a flare-up around the time of their menstrual cycles), low-fiber diets, and infection. Many patients have reported an onset of symptoms during or immediately following a GI infection or abdominal surgery. Finally, the use of certain medications may also contribute to IBS. Antibiotics frequently cause GI problems and diarrhea, and steroid medications may affect the flora (bacteria) balance in the gut, which may then contribute to IBS.

## SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

IBS affects people of all ages and backgrounds, including children. It is commonly characterized by abdominal pain and altered bowel function such as constipation, diarrhea, or alternating diarrhea and constipation. Symptoms will vary from person to person, and while some people experience occasional mild symptoms, others may experience more pronounced symptoms. Symptoms of IBS may include:

- A “lump in the throat”
- Abdominal pain and spasms (often alternating)
- Anxiety
- Bowel urgency or incontinence
- Chest pain
- Depression
- Diarrhea and/or constipation
- Difficulty swallowing
- Excess mucus in the colon/stool
- Fatigue
- Frequent urination
- Heartburn
- Nausea (with or without vomiting)

Although IBS is a serious problem, it is not life-threatening and can be managed with diet and lifestyle changes, as well as natural supplementation.

## STEPS TO ADDRESS IBS

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1. **HERBAL SUPPLEMENTS.** Use an effective, natural formula to help to support the intestinal lining and promote healthy bowel function.
2. **IDENTIFY AND TREAT.** It is important to address the underlying causes of IBS, such as Candida and/or parasites.
3. **CHANGE YOUR DIET.** Avoid irritating foods such as alcohol, caffeine, chocolate, dairy products and sugar, as well as those that are high in sulfur.
4. **ADD FIBER.** Slowly begin to increase your fiber intake with a balance of soluble and insoluble fiber, such as the natural balance found in flax.
5. **REPLACE INTESTINAL FLORA.** Natural probiotic supplements such as those with Acidophilus and Bifidus will help provide a healthy balance of intestinal bacteria.
6. **AVOID RAW VEGETABLES.** During times of significant irritation, it is best to avoid raw vegetables and opt instead for lightly steamed vegetables, fish, and lean protein.
7. **DRINK PLENTY OF WATER.** Drink at least half your body weight in ounces each day (For example, a 120-pound person would require 60 ounces of water, or seven tall glasses).
8. **TRY COLON HYDROTHERAPY.** In contrast to a traditional enema, colon hydrotherapy involves repeated infusions of filtered, warm water into the colon to help tone the bowel and promote healthy elimination.