

## Irritable Bowel Syndrome

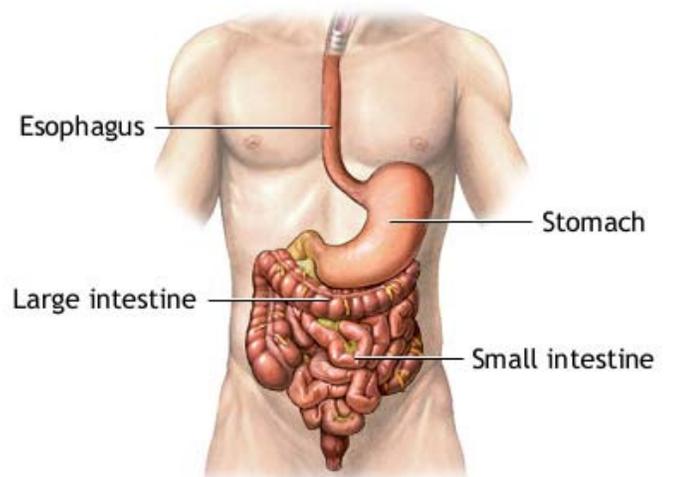
Irritable bowel syndrome, or IBS, is the most common disorder of the digestive tract. IBS is sometimes called a spastic colon. IBS means that your bowel is not functioning smoothly, which causes abdominal pain, constipation, diarrhea or alternating constipation and diarrhea, as well as gas and bloating. Sometimes mucus will be present in the stool.

It is not clear what causes this disorder. Irritable bowel syndrome tends to be a chronic condition that flares up from time to time.

- Stress: Being under stressful conditions can aggravate IBS.
- Foods: Certain foods may bring on symptoms. Lack of certain foods may also be a factor.
- Travel: Disrupting normal eating or sleeping habits may increase symptoms.

The pain of irritable bowel syndrome is caused by spasms in the bowel. Normal bowel function moves stool through the colon in rhythmic waves. In IBS, the waves are uncoordinated and irregular. If the waste moves too slowly, too much water is absorbed and diarrhea occurs.

- Medications may be prescribed to get through severe episodes.
- Identify and reduce stressful situations
- Diet:
  - Increase fiber to normalize bowel, movements by eating foods such as: bran, whole grain cereals, cooked or raw fruit and vegetables.
  - Eat regular meals.
  - Drink plenty of fluids.
  - Exercise daily.
  - Move bowels promptly when the urge occurs.
- Do not use harsh chemical laxatives. Chemical laxatives may cause the bowel to lose its ability to function.
- Fiber supplements are available over the counter, and include Metamucil, Citrucel, FiberCon, and others. Your pharmacist can help you choose one that is best for you.



ADAM.

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If you have any questions or concerns, please call our office at 319-234-5990.

Office hours are Monday–Friday from 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m., with phones answered 24 hours per day for emergencies.