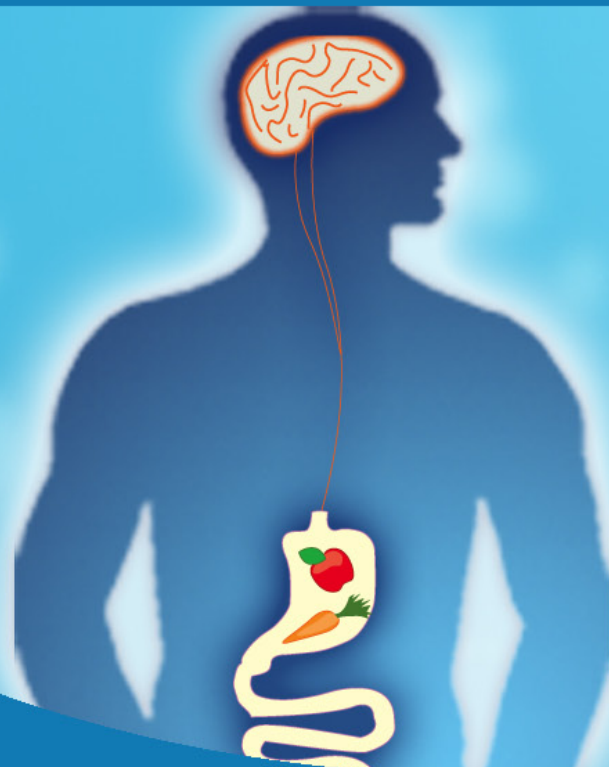


Your Gut Feelings

The Food Body Mind Connection

Overview of Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)



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IBS Patient Resource Sheet

This Resource Sheet is intended to be a guide, which provides you with an overview of IBS.

1. What is Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)?

The bowel is another name for the intestine which is responsible for your digestion, absorption of nutrients and excretion of waste

IBS is defined as a condition where there are intestinal symptoms but without any definable disease for longer than 3 months

2. What are the Symptoms of IBS?

a. Bowel symptoms

- Abdominal discomfort and pain
- Bloating or feeling of fullness
- Constipation; hard, dry or difficult to pass bowel movements
- Diarrhoea; frequent, watery or loose bowel movements

b. Symptoms/conditions known to be associated with IBS

- Tiredness, energy depletion
- Mood changes, depression and anxiety
- Muscle aches or pains (fibromyalgia)
- Urinary frequency
- Some eating disorders

3. What are the possible causes/triggers of IBS?

Possible causes may include:

- a. Damage to the intestinal wall following infection (from the effect of toxins on gut wall)
- b. Increased sensitivity of the nerves in the intestines
- c. Stress (strong brain gut reaction)
- d. Food intolerances from –
 - Fermentable foods (sugars broken down by the gut bacteria) eg lactose, fructose
 - Other foods/ eg gluten, dairy, and various other chemicals found in foods such as amines and salicylates

4. What diagnostic processes may be involved?

These diagnostic processes require a holistic approach.

In particular:

- a. A comprehensive history (important for understanding your condition)
- b. Clinical Examination
- c. Investigations (the selection and order will depend on your personal situation):
 - To exclude (and pursue treatment) of more serious conditions, e.g. tumours, inflammatory bowel disease, such as Crohn's and Ulcerative Colitis, Coeliac disease and intestinal infections.
 - To identify any nutritional deficiencies – a blood and /or urine testing
 - To identify possible aggravating factors and causes.
 - Possible infection - a faecal (stool or poo) test, standard and where indicated specialised tests maybe requested
- d. Food allergies and intolerances –
 - Breath testing for fermentable sugars (FODMAPS) and bacterial iovergrowth
 - Food diary
 - Elimination diet and food challenge to identify foods producing reactions;
 - Other specialised tests

5. How can I manage IBS?

The best approach is to:

- Have a holistic understanding of the connections between the food and the gut AND the gut and the mind.
- Be aware of all your symptoms to report to your doctor
- Identify the possible causes/triggers and understand how they may produce symptoms followed by, a customized treatment plan
- Monitor progress

6. What treatment options are available for IBS?

The order and/or combination will depend on your individual clinical situation and may involve:

- a. Correcting any nutritional imbalances
- b. Address any fermentation issues
- c. Attend to any allergies and intolerances
- d. Minimising gut nervous system stress
- e. Using gut support with specific nutrients, probiotics, anti-inflammatory herbs and immune support
- f. Pharmacological medication where appropriate and useful
- g. Monitoring and re-evaluating the progress

For further information please seek health professional advice.