

Irritable Bowel Syndrome/IBS

IBS is a common gastrointestinal disorder affecting about 10-20 percent of the population. IBS often begins in young adults and affects women twice as often as men. There is no cure for IBS but there are treatments available to alleviate symptoms.

The exact cause of IBS is not clear. Theories suggest that abnormal contractions of the colon and small intestines may provoke the spasms and severe cramps often associated with IBS. Stress, anxiety, severe gastrointestinal infections and food intolerances may aggravate the symptoms of IBS.

Symptoms:

- Primary symptoms of IBS include abdominal pain and cramping usually relieved by having a bowel movement
- Changes in bowel habits
- Diarrhea and/or constipation
- Bloating, gas, and belching

Treatment for IBS may vary from one individual to another depending upon personal triggers. The first step of treatment is monitoring of symptoms to identify those factors that can worsen symptoms that may include lactose in milk products, other food intolerances and stress.

Treatment:

- Diet changes- eliminating foods that can worsen symptoms
May include: milk products, foods that cause gas (beans, cabbage, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, onions), wheat products
- Increasing dietary fiber
- Measures to decrease stress
- Medications

Although IBS can cause pain and emotional stress, most people do not develop serious long-term health conditions and are able to learn to control their symptoms.

Sources and/or additional resources:

Up to Date: http://www.uptodate.com/contents/irritable-bowel-syndrome-beyond-the-basics?source=search_result&search=irritable+bowel+syndrome&selectedTitle=1~18

If you are a registered Millersville University student and you have questions or you need to make an appointment, please call Millersville University Health Services at 871-5250.

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