



Live your Inspired Life

Low FODMAP Diet Coaching

Triggers for IBS

Let's have a look at some of the triggers of IBS apart from High Fodmaps

Carbonated drinks

The bubbles are an irritant of the gut but you also have to look at the sugar content of carbonated drinks - they are loaded. Even the diet drinks are to be avoided even though they often have sweeteners that are low Fodmap like Aspartame. The drawbacks of such artificial sugars have been well-documented so let us not go down that track. The safest carbonated drink would be soda water.

Large meals

Heavy meals can stimulate the hormones involved in the gastrocolic reflex, a reflex that stimulates colon contractions, and thus may cause you to experience stronger, and perhaps more painful, abdominal cramps. Fatty foods do the same thing. Eat smaller meals more often but preferably with at least 3 hours between them. Also, don't consume foods with extreme temperatures, such as ice-cold water and steaming hot soup, in the same meal.

Skipping meals

IBS sufferers are often tempted to skip meals, believing that this will reduce symptoms. However, remember the goal is regularity! Do your part in helping your system to learn to operate in a steady fashion by eating smaller, more frequent, meals on a predictable schedule. Get that routine going and stick to it.

Eating while working

Performing different activities while eating may cause you to swallow more air, eat more quickly, and feel bloated. Take time out from other activities while you enjoy your food.

Liquid intake

Drink six to eight glasses of plain water a day. The jury is out whether to drink with your meals or not but the latest thinking is that you should sip water slowly during your meal. It won't dilute your digestive juices as was once thought and will help the passage of the food through the gut.



Drugs

Some drugs can trigger spasms of the colon and symptoms of IBS. These spasms can lead to constipation or diarrhea. Some common culprits include:

- Antibiotics, especially after prolonged use
- Antidepressants, especially older antidepressants (called tricyclic antidepressants) can cause constipation. Standard antidepressants (called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors, which include Prozac and Zoloft) can cause diarrhea, at least initially. Your doctor can help you find an antidepressant that will not worsen your IBS symptoms.
- Medicine containing sorbitol, such as cough syrup



Menstruation

Studies show that women with IBS tend to have worse symptoms during their periods. There's not a lot of information about preventing this type of trigger, but doctors may recommend certain strategies to ease pain and discomfort during your period. There are certain oral contraceptives and also premenstrual dysphoric disorder (PMDD) drugs. These include drugs also used to treat depression, such as Sarafem, Paxil CR, and Zoloft. These drugs adjust levels of serotonin, a brain chemical thought to be out of balance during certain phases of a woman's cycle. But this is doctor territory and it could be worth a visit.

Advice for IBS sufferers

Stop Being Embarrassed

Keep in mind that although everyone does not have IBS, every person on the planet deals with digestive symptoms. Noises and smells associated with your bowels are something we all experience. And while yes, we have these rules about “polite society,” you are not defined by the fact that you have troublesome intestines.

Don't worry that other people will judge you based on your symptoms. If you pass gas, oh well. Excuse yourself and get on with your day. If others are using the public toilet and you need to go, don't add to your discomfort and stress by thinking that you need to wait for an empty restroom. The people in your life have an opinion of you based on who you are as a person. This opinion will not change if they hear noises or odors coming from the bathroom stall you are in.



Stop Trying to Keep Your IBS a Secret

The only reason why IBS sufferers feel so compelled to hide their IBS from others is due to the part of the body that is involved. That's so unfair. Why should a bowel disorder be any different from one affecting any other part of the body?

The main problem with keeping your IBS a secret is that the stress involved in that may end up making your symptoms worse! Not to mention the fact that positive social support has long been associated with better treatment outcomes. As with any personal revelation, assess the trustworthiness of the other person before opening up. If you feel that they will be supportive and understanding, give yourself permission to let them know what you are dealing with. This allows the people who care about you to work with you to make sure that your unique needs are being met.

Remember that IBS affects a fairly large portion of the population. Once you start opening up, you may be surprised to find out who else is also an IBS sufferer!

Stop Trying to Be Perfect

Many IBS patients find themselves overcompensating because of their IBS. Because of missed work or missed family activities, there is a self-imposed pressure to be perfect. This includes taking on extra responsibility and/or feeling that you can never say no to requests. Your IBS is not a personal failing - it is a health problem, pure and simple. Therefore, there is no need to "make up" for it.



Listen to your own anxiety level. If you are feeling a sense of pressure that something is too much, it probably is. Remember, this type of anxiety is only going to exacerbate your symptoms. Whenever possible, set limits, delegate and prioritize!