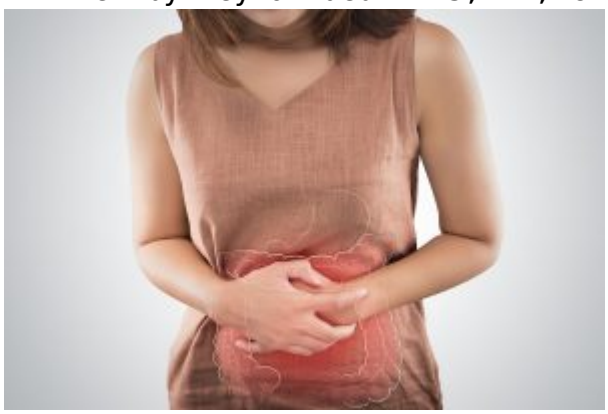
Ask Leyla: It’s IBS Awareness Month – what can I do to manage my IBS?

written by Leyla Muedin MS, RD, CDN | April 6, 2018



Q: I just found out I have Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS). I go from diarrhea to constipation and it’s been happening for the last month. It’s hard to leave the house!

My doctor said to take Imodium when it happens, but I don’t want to live like that. Any suggestions?

A: Unfortunately, Imodium is only taking care of the symptom of diarrhea—not the cause of your IBS.

The prevalence of IBS has increased dramatically over the last decade. There can be many causes of IBS. Here are just a few:

Candida overgrowth: Poor diet, stress and use of antibiotics causes the overgrowth of candida in the gut. Candida normally resides in the GI tract but it’s the overgrowth that’s problematic. Often gas, bloating, and alternating diarrhea with constipation are the main symptoms.

Antibiotics also wipe out beneficial bacteria which is part of our microbiome. Probiotics are necessary to reinoculate the gut with good bacteria during and after the use of antibiotics. A qualified practitioner can advise you on their best use for your personal situation.

Dysbiosis/SIBO (Small Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth): Antibiotic use can cause further dysbiosis in the gut but more and more people are being diagnosed with acid reflux (GERD) and put on acid blockers and inhibitors such as Prilosec, Nexium and Dexilant. These drugs are only intended for short term use (a few weeks) but doctors are increasingly putting their patients on them indefinitely to manage their GERD.

The long term use of these drugs causes pH changes farther down in the gut that favor the growth of undesirable bacteria. Once they flourish they can populate the large intestine and cause symptoms of IBS.

Food allergies/intolerances: Eating foods that you're allergic to or otherwise intolerant of can cause your gut to be "irritable." Proper testing and elimination of problematic foods will bring much relief to those suffering with IBS.

Your best bet is to go to an integrative practitioner who can search for the root cause of your IBS so you can cure it with the right therapies. You can listen to an in-depth *Intelligent Medicine* podcast with Dr. Hoffman about IBS here.

To your health!

Leyla Muedin, MS, RD, CDN