

Ask Leyla: What is your advice for someone recently diagnosed with IBS?

Q: I just found out I have IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome). For the past month, I've gone back and forth between diarrhea and constipation, and it's made it 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, alternating diarrhea with constipation are the main symptoms.

Antibiotics also wipe out beneficial bacteria which are 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 further 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 has clients all over the country via telephone consultations. No need to travel to New York City for a nutrition consult at the Hoffman Center. Should you require her services, please call our office to set up an appointment: (212) 779-1744.