

Leyla Weighs In: The causes of IBS



April is IBS Awareness Month

The prevalence of IBS has increased dramatically over the last decade. In fact, an estimated 30 to 45 million people in the United States—10 to 15 percent of the population—are affected by IBS, according to the International Foundation for Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders.

There can be many causes of IBS. Here are just a few:

Candida overgrowth: Poor diet, stress and use of antibiotics cause 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 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 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!

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