
NUTRITION INFORMATION FROM YOUR DIETITIAN

Irritable Bowel Syndrome

What is Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)?

IBS is a physical disorder that affects the bowel, which consists of both the small and large intestines. The bowel is part of the digestive tract and is also where the body makes and stores stool. Individuals with IBS have a high level of sensitivity in their bowels and are more susceptible to stomach discomfort. About 10 to 15 out of every 100 people have IBS.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms vary widely from person to person, but some of the common symptoms are:

- Abdominal pain
- Urgency
- Mucus in the stool
- Bloating
- Diarrhea or constipation, or both
- Nighttime diarrhea
- Gas
- Acid reflux

It may be helpful to track the foods you eat and your symptoms in a diary. This can help you know when foods are causing your symptoms.

Indications for Use

The two main causes of IBS symptoms are stress and diet. In general, large meals, fatty foods, caffeine and sugary foods are poorly tolerated by individuals with IBS. Some individuals may experience reactions to other foods. Stress management can also help reduce the symptoms of IBS. Physical activity has been shown to improve GI mobility and reduce IBS symptoms. Getting regular exercise (20-30 minutes, 3 to 5 days a week) can help. When your symptoms are flaring up, be sure to limit exercise and rest periodically throughout the day.

Description of the Diet

The goal of these guidelines is to highlight foods that can cause symptoms and foods that may help relieve symptoms.

- Foods that cause symptoms are called **trigger foods**. These foods irritate or trigger abnormal nerve stimulation which can then cause either constipation or diarrhea. There are some common trigger foods amongst IBS patients, and there are some unique to the individual. Eliminating foods and adding them back in slowly one at a time will help to identify what is causing your symptoms.
- Foods that may help decrease BOTH diarrhea and constipation, and other IBS symptoms are called **soothing foods**.



IBS Eating Guide

- Eat meals and snacks on a regular schedule.
- Aim for 5 or 6 small meals/snacks each day. Do not skip meals.





This handout is intended for use during an appointment with a registered dietitian only and is not meant for use by other clinicians.

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- Chew your foods thoroughly. This could help prevent you from swallowing air with your food.
- Aim to consume 6 to 8 cups of water throughout the day in addition to your other beverages.
- During symptom flare ups, reduce fiber intake
 - Choose grains with refined white flour products (cream of wheat, fine-ground grits, white bread, white pasta, white rice, cold cereals made from white flour).
 - Check labels for less than 2 grams of fiber per serving.
 - Cook vegetables and use canned fruits rather than fresh fruits and vegetables.
- During periods of remission (no symptoms), consume a regular diet with adequate fiber. Increase your fiber intake slowly.
- A low-fat diet is often better tolerated. You may feel better if you avoid fried foods, fatty red meats, and foods prepared with added fat. If you do eat high fat foods, do so along with other foods, such as a protein source or carbohydrate.
- Limit acidic or spicy foods, caffeine, and chocolate and mint if you have symptoms of reflux or have been diagnosed with gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD).
- Avoid cold food and drinks on an empty stomach as this can cause symptoms.
- Watch what you drink. Avoid drinks with caffeine, artificial sweeteners, and alcohol. All can stimulate the intestines and cause diarrhea.
- If you are unsure if a food will cause a reaction, don't eat it on an empty stomach. Only try 1 new food every 3 days.
- When trying a new food, or one you haven't had in a few weeks or more, keep a record of how it makes you feel.
- Make meals calm and enjoyable.
- If constipated, ask your doctor about a fiber supplement such as Metamucil (psyllium) or a stool softener.
- If your symptoms continue, your dietitian may have you limit high FODMAPS foods. Talk with your dietitian for further information.

FOOD GROUP	FOODS RECOMMENDED	FOODS TO AVOID
<p>Starches, Breads & Grains</p> 	<p>Rice, pasta, oatmeal, barley, French bread, sourdough bread, rice cereals, flour tortillas, soy, quinoa, corn meal, baked tortilla chips, cold cereals (not high fiber), tapioca</p>	<p>Whole wheat/whole grains, flours, breads, and cereals, wheat bran, rye, granola, Muesli, pie crust, beans, croissants, pastries, biscuits, scones, doughnuts</p>
<p>Fruits</p> 	<p>Banana, applesauce, papaya, cantaloupe, oranges</p>	<p>Apples, berries, grapes, raisins, cherries, pineapple, peaches, nectarines, apricots, pears with skins, rhubarb, lemons, limes, grapefruits, dates, prunes, mango, watermelon, dried fruit, fruit juice, fruit canned in natural juice</p>

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FOOD GROUP	FOODS RECOMMENDED	FOODS TO AVOID
<p>Vegetables</p> 	<p>Potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots, yams, turnips, parsnips, beets, squash, baked potato chips, most canned vegetables</p>	<p>French fries, onion rings, spinach, kale, lettuce, mescaline, collards, arugula, watercress, peas, snow peas, pea pods, corn, peppers, eggplant, celery, onions, garlic shallots, leeks, cabbage, bok choy, Brussel sprouts, broccoli, cauliflower, raw tomatoes, cucumbers with skins, sprouts, mushrooms</p>
<p>Milk and Dairy</p> 	<p>Soy milk, yogurt, aged cheeses (cheddar, parmesan, provolone, Swiss), low fat ice cream</p>	<p>Milk, sour cream, cream cheese, ice cream, whipped cream, soft cheeses (ricotta or cottage)</p>
<p>Meats and Meat Substitutes</p> 	<p>Fish (especially white fish), white chicken and turkey, eggs, soy foods made without added fat, nut butters</p>	<p>Egg yolks, red meat (high fat), dark meat chicken and turkey, corn dogs, salami, pastrami, bologna, and other high fat lunchmeats, dried beans and peas if they cause gas</p>
<p>Fats and Oils Limits fats to less than 8 tsp per day</p> 	<p>Use caution with all of these and follow eating tips when using them</p>	<p>Shortening, butter, margarine, mayonnaise, salad dressing, tartar sauce, cool whip, coconut milk, coconut, olives, nuts, nut butters, potato chips, corn chips, and nachos</p>
<p>Sweets and Desserts</p> 	<p>Gelatin, angel food cake, vanilla wafers, fortune cookies, animal crackers, low-fat cake, low-fat muffins</p>	<p>Chocolate, solid carob, candy with coconut or nuts, foods containing high fructose corn syrup</p>

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Beverages 	Water, V8 juice, sparkling water, sports drinks	Coffee, sodas, caffeinated teas, alcohol, apple juice, prune juice, grape juice
Miscellaneous 	Herbs and spices with caution, sugar, brown sugar, pure peppermint, chamomile, ginger, ketchup mustard	Honey, high fructose corn syrup MSG, Olestra, sorbitol, mannitol, maltitol, xylitol, and other sweeteners ending in -ol

What can I eat when I'm having many attacks?

Due to varying stress levels, severe IBS attacks can be triggered. When this happens, it may feel like all food is causing symptoms. Here is a list of **soothing foods** to eat when you feel like you can't tolerate anything.

- White bread
- Toasted plain bagels
- Toasted plain English Muffins
- Cream of Rice
- Pretzels
- Saltines
- Angel food cake
- Plain baked potatoes (no skin)
- White rice
- Cereal: Corn Chex, Rice Chex, Rice Krispies, and Corn Pops, dry
- Bananas
- Pasta
- Teas: pure peppermint, chamomile, or ginger

Dietitian: _____

Phone: _____

Facility: _____

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