

## Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)

If you think that you are (or anyone you know is) suffering from this distressing health problem, you are suffering unnecessarily! As your Naturopath my work is to help you identify all of the things which are driving your IBS and give the body support, until the body has had time to calm down all the inflammation processes and heal. The healing process can take weeks and sometimes months but will change your life as you know it! The greatest reward for you (apart from the physical and mental relief) is the wisdom and awareness you gain as you get to know how your body works and what is good and bad for it.

Realise that what (and how) you eat, drink, sleep, breath, think, feel, love and live directly affects how gracefully, happily and healthily you age.

IBS is a functional bowel disorder characterised by abdominal pain and changes in bowel habits which are not associated with any abnormalities seen on routine clinical testing e.g. Colonoscopies.

IBS often starts in young adulthood but may manifest at any age. The syndrome is a major cause of lost work or school time and affects twice as many females than males.


IBS symptoms result when peristaltic contractions (these are the involuntary muscle contractions your intestinal wall makes constantly to move faeces through your intestine) becoming disorganised, harsh and/or spasmodic, which can cause pain. The erratic propulsion which results can cause sudden, explosive elimination of stools, or can delay any elimination.

Major causative factors and risk factors that can contribute to the incidence of IBS include:

- Stress
- Depression
- Candida Albicans overgrowth
- Eating foods which you may be intolerant to (talk to me about how we identify these)
- Alcohol or caffeine
- Familial predisposition
- Certain drugs (e.g., NSAID's) can aggravate the bowel's tendency to contract abnormally.
- Hormones – menstruation frequently triggers or exacerbates IBS symptoms, while pregnancy and menopause improve symptoms. Hormone replacement therapy is associated with an increased risk of developing IBS.

Common signs and symptoms of IBS include the following:

- Abnormal stool frequency (“abnormal” may be defined as greater than 3 bowel movements per day and less than 4 bowel movements per week)
- Abnormal stool form (lumpy/hard or loose/watery stool)
- Abnormal stool passage (straining, urgency, or feeling of incomplete evacuation)
- Passage of mucous
- Bloating or feeling of abdominal distension
- Straining during a bowel movement

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- Urgency (having to rush to have a bowel movement)
  - Feeling of incomplete bowel movement
  - Abdominal pain and/or discomfort relieved by a bowel movement
  - Changes in bowel habits
  - Diarrhoea or constipation, or both alternately
  - Need for bowel movement immediately on waking or after eating
  - FATIGUE

Also there may be:

- Headaches
- Frequent urination
- Burping
- Indigestion
- Teeth grinding and jaw clenching
- Anxiety, depression
- Painful menstrual periods.

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