

### 3.13 Digestive health - Irritable bowel syndrome

Yvonne, 32, has had some blood tests after seeing the doctor because of bloating, tummy discomfort and intermittent constipation. There has been no blood in her stool. Her full blood count, TTG and Thyroid Stimulating Hormone tests were all normal.

Yvonne: I've been really really worried about these blood tests doctor.

Provide: I'm really pleased to tell you that your blood tests are normal.

Elicit: I hope you will find that reassuring?

Yvonne: So what on earth is going on?

Provide: As your weight has stayed the same, and given your age, it is extremely unlikely you have a worrying cause for your symptoms. The most likely thing explaining your tummy pain and bloating is irritable bowel syndrome or IBS.

Elicit: Have you heard of that?

Yvonne: Yes. That is usually a stress thing isn't it?

Provide: Stress can be a trigger for some of the symptoms of IBS including diarrhoea. And CBT (that's a talking therapy called cognitive behavioural therapy can be very useful in controlling IBS symptoms if they appear to be linked to stress.

Elicit: How does that grab you?

Yvonne: I don't think that's for me.

Provide: Your diet may affect your symptoms. If you think that your diet is linked to IBS symptoms it may be worth me getting you to see a dietitian. Low FODMAP diets can be very effective in improving IBS symptoms, but you need a dietitian's support to work out what might work and how to keep your diet balanced.

Elicit: What do you think?

Yvonne: I'll think about it, and let you know.

Provide: It's worth trying out probiotic capsules, yoghurts or drinks for a couple of weeks.

If you're losing weight, or bleeding come back and see me soon. Likewise if you're struggling with your symptoms, let me know.

Elicit: Would you like more information about IBS?