

Diet and Lifestyle Tips for Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)



Your healthcare provider may suggest some lifestyle changes to help control your IBS. Changing your diet and managing stress are 2 of the most important changes. Follow your healthcare provider's instructions. Try some of the advice below.

Change your diet

Your diet may be an important cause of IBS symptoms. You may want to try the following:

- Pay attention to what foods bother you, and stay away from them. For example, dairy products are hard for some people to digest. Lactose-free dairy products may be better for your symptoms.
- Don't eat high FODMAP foods. Common foods that can cause symptoms have carbohydrates called FODMAPs. Your body can't digest these well. High FODMAP foods include some fruits, such as apples, vegetables, such as cabbage, and some dairy. They also include certain sweeteners, such as high-fructose corn syrup, sorbitol, and xylitol. Many people find that eating a diet low in FODMAPs can ease symptoms. Talk with your healthcare provider about a low FODMAP diet.
- Drink 6 to 8 glasses of water a day.
- Don't have caffeine or tobacco. These can affect how your digestive tract works.
- Don't drink alcohol. It can irritate your digestive tract. It can make your symptoms worse.
- Eat more fiber if constipation is a problem. Fiber makes the stool softer. That makes it easier to pass through the colon.
- Eat more fiber if diarrhea is a problem. Fiber also helps to bind water. This can help to firm up loose stool.



Reduce stress

Learn how to manage stress if stress or anxiety makes your IBS symptoms worse. Managing stress may help you feel better. Try these tips:

- Find out what causes stress in your life.
- Learn new ways to cope with them. Mindfulness, meditation, and yoga may help.
- Regular exercise is a great way to ease stress. It can also help ease constipation. For adults, the CDC recommends 150 minutes of moderate activity each week. Or you can get 75 minutes of vigorous activity each week. It also advises muscle-strengthening activities 2 days a week. If this sounds like a lot of time, the CDC suggests breaking physical activity into 10-minute blocks. You can spread those out over a week. Developing a schedule that works for you is the key to a successful exercise program.

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