

# THINGS PEOPLE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME

In the Clinic  
Annals of Internal Medicine

- IBS causes pain, cramping, bloating, gas, diarrhea, and constipation. Another name for the condition is spastic colitis.
- The cause of IBS is believed to be intestines that are overly sensitive to normal intestinal movement, gas, some foods, and stress.
- There is no test for IBS, so doctors make the diagnosis by carefully evaluating symptoms and excluding other conditions.
- There is no cure, but people with IBS can control symptoms by healthy diet and exercise, managing stress, avoiding things that trigger symptoms, and taking medications to treat symptoms.

## Web Sites with Good Information about Irritable Bowel Syndrome

### MedlinePLUS

[www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/irritablebowelsyndrome.html](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/irritablebowelsyndrome.html)

### National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

[http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/ibs\\_ez/](http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/ibs_ez/)

### International Foundation for Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders

[www.aboutibs.org/](http://www.aboutibs.org/)

### Mayo Clinic

[www.mayoclinic.com/health/irritable-bowel-syndrome/MM00461](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/irritable-bowel-syndrome/MM00461) (a short video clip that provides information about irritable bowel syndrome)

## HEALTH TIPS\*

**Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a common problem that can cause constipation, diarrhea, or both. Sometimes there is stomach pain or gas. IBS comes and goes but never goes away for good. IBS does not cause cancer.**

### What You Can Do:

Find out what makes your IBS symptoms worse

- Stress at home or work
- Some foods

Write down when your IBS symptoms happen

- Get help to deal with stress
- Stay away from too much caffeine, soda, fatty foods, and laxatives

See your doctor often to keep your IBS on track. Next doctor's visit \_\_\_\_\_

### Things to Ask your Doctor:

What causes IBS?

Do I need any tests?

Why do I have problems if all my tests are normal?

How can I deal with stress?

Do I need medicine for my IBS?

Why doesn't medicine always work for my IBS?

What are the side effects of my medicines for IBS?

\*HEALTH TIPS are developed by the American College of Physicians Foundation and PIER and are designed to be understood by most patients.