

### TAKE THE IBS TEST

	YES	NO
Do you have recurrent abdominal pain or discomfort?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you often feel bloated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you frequently constipated?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do you have frequent diarrhea?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have you talked to your doctor?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Abdominal Discomfort or Pain

Bloating

Constipation

Diarrhea

If you have one or all of these symptoms, you may have a real and treatable medical condition called irritable bowel syndrome (IBS). Your doctor now has new information and treatments that can finally give you the relief you deserve. See your doctor, talk about your symptoms and ask about new treatments that may be right for you.



American College of Gastroenterology  
*Digestive Disease Specialists Committed to Quality in Patient Care*

P.O. Box 3099  
Alexandria, VA 22302

Assistance through an unrestricted educational grant from NOVARTIS

### UNDERSTANDING IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME A Consumer Education Brochure

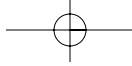


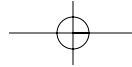
Millions of Americans suffer from abdominal pain, bloating, constipation and diarrhea. Now new treatments can relieve your pain and discomfort.

For more information call or visit  
**1-866-IBS-RELIEF**  
[www.ibsrelief.org](http://www.ibsrelief.org)



American College of Gastroenterology  
*Digestive Disease Specialists Committed to Quality in Patient Care*





## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1. What Is Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)? .....1
- 2. How Common is IBS? .....2
- 3. How Does IBS Affect Patients' Lives? .....2
- 4. Are There Different Types of IBS? .....3
- 5. What Causes Bowel Symptoms in Irritable Bowel Syndrome? .....3
- 6. When Should You See the Doctor? .....4
- 7. How is IBS Diagnosed? .....4
- 8. What is a Gastroenterologist? .....4
- 9. What Treatments are Used for Symptoms of IBS with Constipation? .....5
  - Tegaserod
  - Fiber and Laxatives
  - Antispasmodics and Antidepressants
- 10. What are the Treatments for IBS with Diarrhea? ...6
- 11. Lifestyle, Diet & Stress .....7
- 12. Is Surgery an Option for Remediying IBS Symptoms? .....8
- 13. IBS and Quality of Life .....8

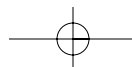
## Abdominal Discomfort or Pain, Bloating, Constipation or Diarrhea.

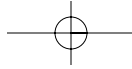
If you have some or all of these symptoms, you may suffer from a treatable medical condition called irritable bowel syndrome or IBS. While not life threatening, this disorder can have significant impact on your life.

If you suffer from these symptoms, see your doctor, talk about your symptoms and ask about treatment that may be right for you. For many sufferers, the abdominal discomfort, bloating, constipation and diarrhea of IBS can be managed effectively. For those patients who will now seek care, physicians have new treatment options that can relieve the abdominal pain, bloating and constipation of IBS and improve your quality of life, giving you the relief you deserve.

### 1. What Is Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)?

IBS is a functional gastrointestinal (GI) disorder; it is a real and treatable medical condition. IBS is a real medical disorder that is characterized by recurring symptoms (that come and go over time) of abdominal discomfort or pain associated with an altered bowel habit, either constipation, diarrhea or both. IBS is different from routine, infrequent constipation or diarrhea.





**For many, IBS may be best defined by what it is NOT:**

- It is NOT an anatomical or structural problem
- It is NOT an identifiable physical or chemical disorder
- It is NOT a cancer and will NOT cause cancer
- It will NOT cause other gastrointestinal diseases

If you have constipation frequently associated with abdominal discomfort and/or bloating, diarrhea or alternating symptoms (constipation sometimes, diarrhea at others), you may have irritable bowel syndrome, and you should see your doctor or a gastrointestinal specialist to evaluate your symptoms.

Remember, IBS is a real medical condition, but it is not life threatening, and will not lead to other serious diseases. Your GI tract may work differently, moving more slowly (or more quickly) than the average.

## 2. How Common is IBS?

If you suffer from the symptoms of IBS you are not alone. IBS is one of the most common gastrointestinal disorders in the United States affecting more than 58 million people. IBS affects all races and both men and women, however approximately 4 out of 5 (or 80 percent) of IBS sufferers are women. The reason for this is unclear. Women may be more conscientious in seeking health care, or there may be gender-based biological differences that explain this higher incidence among women.

## 3. How Does IBS Affect Patients' Lives?

IBS can have a substantial impact on patients' lives. IBS symptoms can disrupt patients' daily lives causing them to miss school or work, reduce social activities and interactions, skip meals or make other changes to diet and nutrition. Consumer

surveys have established that IBS is a major reason for increased absences and reduced productivity. So, there are compelling reasons for employers to be interested in improving access to treatment for patients with IBS. Overall, patients who have untreated IBS report significant reductions in their overall quality-of-life.

## 4. Are There Different Types of IBS?

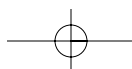
Generally, doctors classify IBS based on the cluster of symptoms experienced by the patient including IBS with Constipation (abdominal discomfort or pain, bloating and constipation), IBS with Diarrhea (abdominal discomfort or pain, urgency and diarrhea) or IBS with alternating constipation and diarrhea.

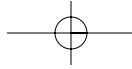
There are approximately an equal number of patients in each of these classifications. By determining the type of IBS that you suffer from, doctors are able to determine the right treatment. So it's important for you to describe all of your symptoms to your doctor including your bowel habits.



## 5. What Causes Bowel Symptoms in Irritable Bowel Syndrome?

The exact cause of IBS is not clear. However, recent medical research has shown that patients experiencing abdominal pain or discomfort, bloating and constipation or diarrhea may have a gastrointestinal (GI) tract that is more sensitive and works more slowly or quickly than it should. Infrequent, occasional constipation or diarrhea is not abnormal. Most people experience these symptoms from time to time. Recurrent constipation, or constipation that is frequently accompanied by abdominal pain or bloating, or constipation alternating with diarrhea or recurrent diarrhea, is a sign that you may have IBS and need to see the doctor.





## 6. When Should You See the Doctor?

If you experience recurring diarrhea or constipation that is frequently associated with abdominal discomfort and/or bloating, or constipation alternating with diarrhea, you may have a real and treatable medical disorder called irritable bowel syndrome, and you should see your doctor or a gastrointestinal specialist to evaluate your symptoms.

## 7. How is IBS Diagnosed?

The doctor likely will start by asking you about your symptoms. It's important for the doctor to understand the symptoms you are experiencing. So, describe all of your symptoms to your doctor. Tell your doctor about your abdominal discomfort, bloating and your bowel symptoms. Your doctor may ask if you strain or have difficulty having a bowel movement and ask you to describe the appearance of your bowel movement. Doctors



sometimes request that some medical tests be performed to assure that you do not have a more dangerous GI condition.

Your doctor will rule out other disorders. Your doctor will ask if you have experienced rectal bleeding, significant weight loss, recurring fever, anemia, and chronic severe diarrhea. Routine use of colon cancer screening tests are recommended for those with a family history of colon cancer and for all patients 50 years or older, including IBS patients.

## 8. What is a Gastroenterologist?

A gastroenterologist is a physician who specializes in disorders and conditions of the gastrointestinal tract. Most gastroenterologists are board-certified in this subspecialty. After completing the same

training as all other physicians, they first complete at least another two years of additional training in order to attain board certification in internal medicine, then study for an additional 2-3 years to train specifically in conditions of the gastrointestinal tract.

## 9. What Treatments are Used for Symptoms of IBS with Constipation?

Unfortunately, and for too long, IBS has been poorly understood, and there was little in the way of treatment that could relieve symptoms. The lack of effective treatments has often been discouraging to patients. Fortunately, with more scientific knowledge and an improved range of treatment options, doctors can now provide relief of the symptoms of IBS.

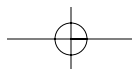
### TEGASEROD

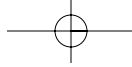
The U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) has recently approved a prescription treatment called tegaserod to treat the abdominal pain or discomfort, bloating and constipation of IBS. Tegaserod (which is part of a class of drugs known as 5HT receptor agonists) has been shown in studies to be more effective than placebo (sugar pill) in relieving the global spectrum of IBS symptoms in female IBS patients: abdominal discomfort or pain, bloating and constipation.



### FIBER AND LAXATIVES

There are a number of things that you can try to alleviate occasional infrequent constipation, mostly involving lifestyle modifications or use of over-the-counter medications. Increasing intake of water, fruits, increasing daily exercise, and taking





laxatives or products with increased fiber content can help relieve occasional, infrequent constipation.

Fiber supplements may be used for control of occasional diarrhea or constipation, but scientific evidence has not demonstrated any benefit in relieving abdominal discomfort or discomfort and bloating and in some patients fiber supplements may worsen bloating. Laxatives may be prescribed for occasional constipation, although scientific studies have not solidly demonstrated a benefit.

#### ANTISPASMODICS AND ANTIDEPRESSANTS

In patients with abdominal pain, some patients have reported relief from antispasmodics, but the data remain insufficient to recommend these medications. Antidepressants are sometimes used, and they may improve abdominal pain, but have not been demonstrated to address the other global IBS symptoms. In some patients, antispasmodics and antidepressants can worsen constipation symptoms.

#### 10. What are the Treatments for IBS with Diarrhea?



If you have diarrhea, your doctor may prescribe drugs to decrease the number of bowel movements. Diphenoxylate with atropine or loperamide can be used to treat occasional diarrhea. However, scientific evidence has not demonstrated any benefit from these medica-

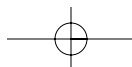
tions in relieving abdominal discomfort or pain. Some female patients with IBS and diarrhea may benefit from the use of a medication called alosetron, which is more effective than placebo (sugar

pill) in relieving the symptoms of IBS in female patients with diarrhea. There is an important history of significant side effects, including colon ischemia (circulatory disorder of the colon) and constipation, which must be weighed against the general good efficacy of that medication.

#### 11. Lifestyle, Diet & Stress

Before some of the newer medications were available, much of the effort to treat IBS symptoms focused on lifestyle, diet and reduction of stress. There are some dietary changes that some patients have found helpful:

- Avoid or limit the amount of gas-producing foods such as beans, onions, broccoli, cabbage, or any other foods that you know will commonly aggravate your IBS symptoms.
- Try to slow down how fast you eat and avoid overeating.
- Avoid drinking carbonated drinks (colas, pop, soda). These can introduce gas into the intestines and cause abdominal pain. Chewing gum also may lead to a significant amount of air being swallowed.
- Avoid large quantities of the sugar substitute sorbitol which can cause excess gas, bloating, cramping and diarrhea.
- Intolerance to milk sugar, lactose, is seen in up to 40% of patients with IBS. Avoiding dairy products may be helpful in reducing symptoms of IBS.
- The addition of wheat bran or other fiber may be suggested by your doctor in an attempt to decrease your symptoms.
- If you make changes to your diet, do it gradually to give your body time to adjust.



Overall health can be improved by reducing stress, and IBS and its symptoms are no exception. Some patients have attained some relief through relaxation techniques and participation in regular exercise or a hobby. IBS symptoms are not manifestations of psychological disorders. Behavioral therapies have been demonstrated to have positive impact on symptoms for some IBS patients.

### 12. Is Surgery an Option for Remedying IBS Symptoms?

No surgical treatment is indicated or recommended for patients with constipation and IBS.

### 13. IBS and Quality of Life

Having a long-standing battle with any physical disease or condition is usually debilitating for the patient. IBS is no exception. It can significantly detract from social interactions and the quality of life. It is important to remember that the condition is real, that it is not your fault. Patients who have had IBS for years, and those who begin to experience with some regularity symptoms of abdominal pain, bloating



and/or constipation or diarrhea, should recognize that seeing the physician and considering some of the newer available treatments could improve your life.

### Some Key Points to Remember about Abdominal Discomfort or Pain, Bloating and Constipation

In conclusion, here are some important things to remember about constipation and IBS:

- Symptoms of abdominal discomfort, bloating and constipation may be part of a real, treatable medical condition called IBS
- Through no fault of their own, patients have spent a significant amount of time suffering
- Symptoms disrupt patients' everyday lives, social interactions and work
- Abdominal pain, bloating and constipation characterize a major portion of IBS sufferers
- Many sufferers do not seek care for IBS
- Today, for many patients, the abdominal discomfort, bloating and constipation of IBS can be managed effectively
- Physicians now have new therapies that can more effectively manage and provide relief for the abdominal discomfort, bloating and constipation of IBS
- New therapies for IBS offer realistic hope to help restore quality of life which these patients deserve, but which many may have believed was out of reach

If you experience constipation about one week out of the month, or if your constipation is frequently associated with abdominal discomfort and/or bloating, you may have a real and treatable common medical disorder called irritable bowel syndrome, and you should see your doctor or a gastrointestinal specialist to evaluate your symptoms.