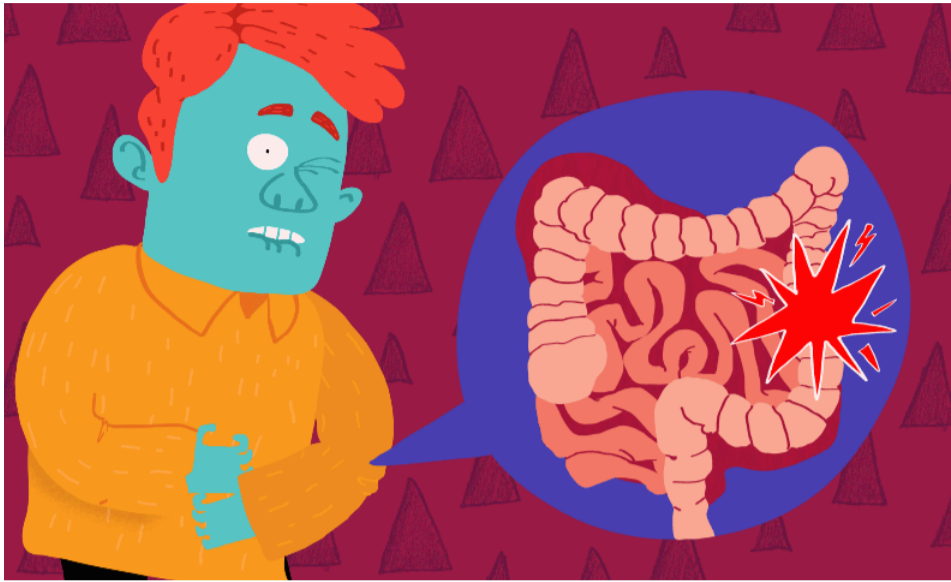


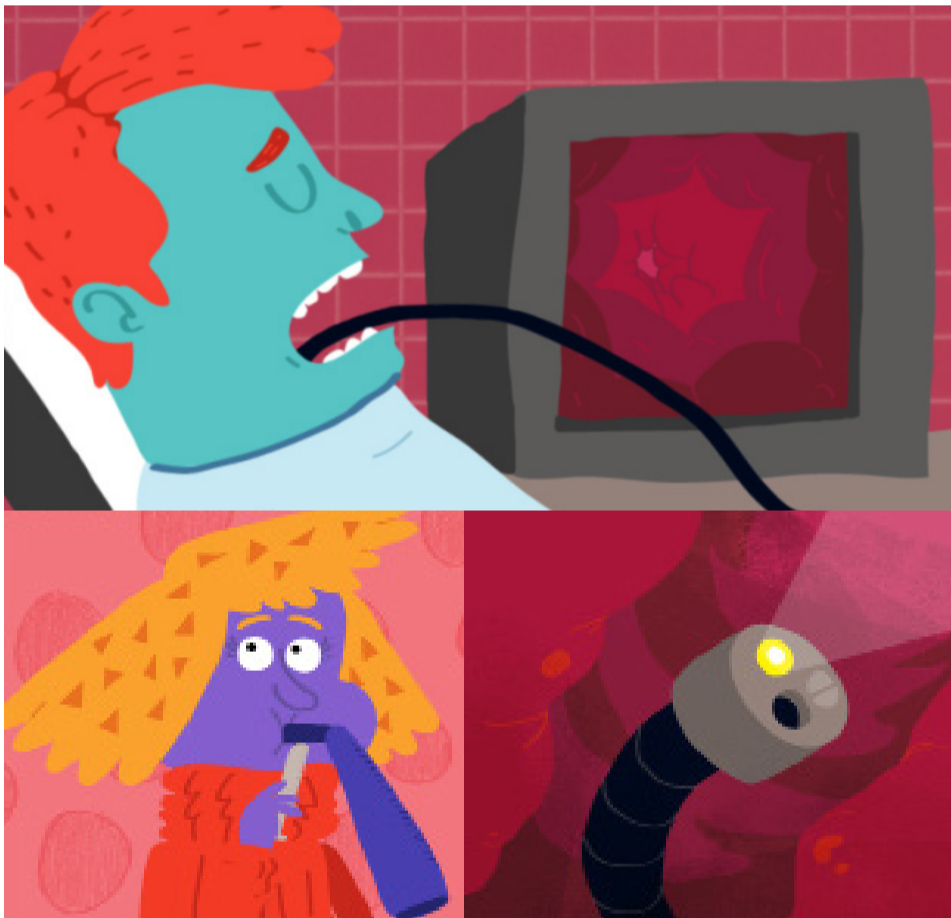
Irritable Bowel Syndrome

What is Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)?



Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) is a gastrointestinal disorder impacting digestion and creating pain, cramping, discomfort and bloating. It is a chronic condition that can be managed through lifestyle changes, medication and stress management.

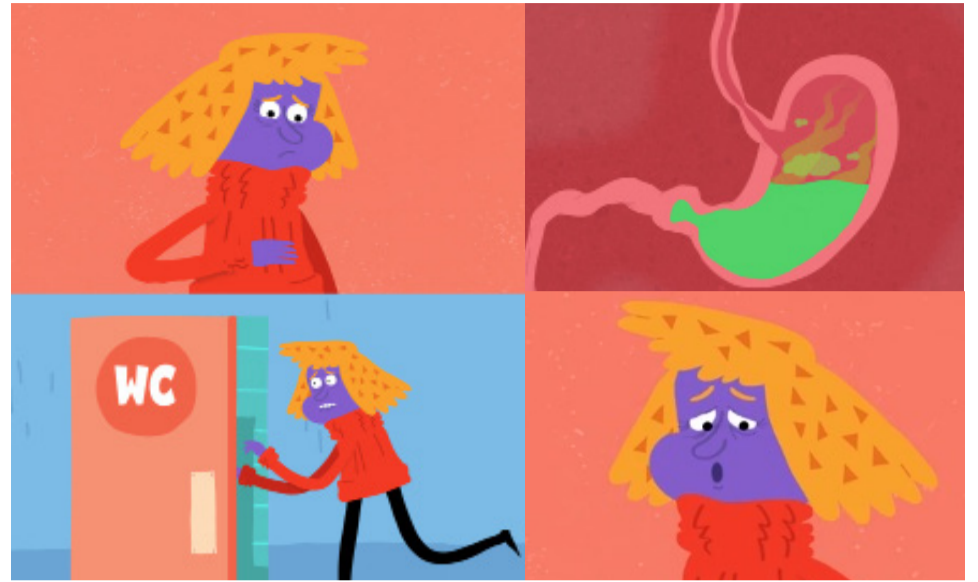
How is IBS diagnosed?



There is no test to diagnose IBS. However, your doctor can prescribe several tests to rule out other diagnosis. These tests can include diagnostic procedures or laboratory tests such as:

- **Colonoscopy:** an examination of the entire length of the colon using a small, flexible tube;
- **CT scan:** the scan captures images of the abdomen and pelvis to identify possible other causes of symptoms;
- **Upper endoscopy:** a long, flexible tube is inserted through the throat and down into the esophagus. A tissue or fluid sample may be collected during this process, and the tube is fitted with a camera allowing your doctor to view your upper digestive tract;
- **Lactose intolerance tests:** Lactase is an enzyme needed to digest the sugars in dairy products. By assessing your lactose intolerance through a breath test, your doctor can determine where this may be a cause of your IBS symptoms. You may be asked to reduce or remove milk products from your diet before and/or after this test;
- **Breath test for bacterial overgrowth:** a breath test can also help identify if there is an overgrowth of bacteria in the small intestine. Presence of bacteria can indicate diabetes or another disease that impacts digestion;
- **Stool tests:** the stool may be evaluated for bacteria, parasites or bile acid which can all impede digestion.

What are the symptoms of IBS?



Symptoms may include abdominal bloating; cramping or pain during bowel movement; feeling of not being able to empty bowels completely; changes in stool appearance or frequency; gas or mucus in stool.

What are the treatment options?



Symptoms are treated by a combination of dietary changes, medication and psychological therapy. Mild symptoms can be managed through dietary changes such as the avoidance of triggering foods, eating a high fiber diet and increasing fluid intake. Getting enough exercise and sleep is also important to maintaining overall gut health. Moderate to severe symptoms may require medications including: Fiber supplements; Laxatives; Anti-diarrheal medications; Anti-cholinergic medications; Antidepressants; Pain medication; Specific medications developed for the treatment of IBS.

Mental health in IBS management



Whether symptoms are mild, moderate or severe, stress management is essential to managing symptoms. IBS is sensitive to stress due to immune system links between the gut and the brain. Because of this, it is critical that the treatment of IBS includes an understanding of how patients can manage stress and stress-induced responses. Interventions for stress management can include medication, meditation, deep breathing and exercise.

If you are experiencing symptoms of IBS, consult your primary care provider for medical advice & assistance.

The information above is drawn from public health sources; it is not designed to provide medical advice. Individuals should consult their own health professional for guidance on all health matters.

Sources: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/irritable-bowel-syndrome/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20360064>; [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4202343/#:~:text=Stress%2Dinduced%2Dalterations%2Din%2Dneu-ro,stress%20and%20stress%2Dinduced%20responses](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4202343/#:~:text=Stress%2Dinduced%2Dalterations%2Din%2Dneu-ro,stress%20and%20stress%2Dinduced%20responses;); <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/irritable-bowel-syndrome/symptoms-causes/syc-20360016>