

Irritable Bowel Syndrome, or IBS, is a cluster of symptoms that affects more than 22 million Americans. It is a painful, often disabling condition that can mimic a more serious illness. It is the second leading cause of absenteeism in the United States, after the common cold. IBS usually appears in late adolescence or early adulthood, and occurs more commonly in women than in men. Although there is no cure for IBS, symptoms can be managed with dietary and lifestyle changes.

Symptoms:

- ◆ Abdominal pain (most often along the lower left side)
- ◆ Changes in frequency and/or consistency of bowel movements, including alternating diarrhea and constipation
- ◆ Bloating
- ◆ Gas
- ◆ Heartburn
- ◆ Nausea
- ◆ Loss of appetite

These symptoms are caused by irregular, poorly coordinated contractions of the large intestine (bowel or colon). These spasms lead to the discomfort and bowel disturbances that are typically observed in those with IBS. It is not known what caus-

Diagnosis:

If you experience these symptoms persistently, see your doctor. Your doctor will review your medical history, lifestyle habits, and perform some lab tests to rule out other possible causes. If none of these tests reveal any other digestive disorders, you probably suffer from IBS.

Treatment:

The symptoms of IBS can be managed or prevented by following these recommendations:

Stress: Anxiety and tension appear to be triggers.

Exercise: Physical activity promotes the smooth functioning of the GI tract and helps relieve stress.

Medication: Your doctor may prescribe medications to control spasms, or in some cases, laxatives.

Diet: The foods you eat can have the most impact on your symptom management. Certain foods may aggravate IBS, while following a healthful diet can prevent uncomfortable symptoms.

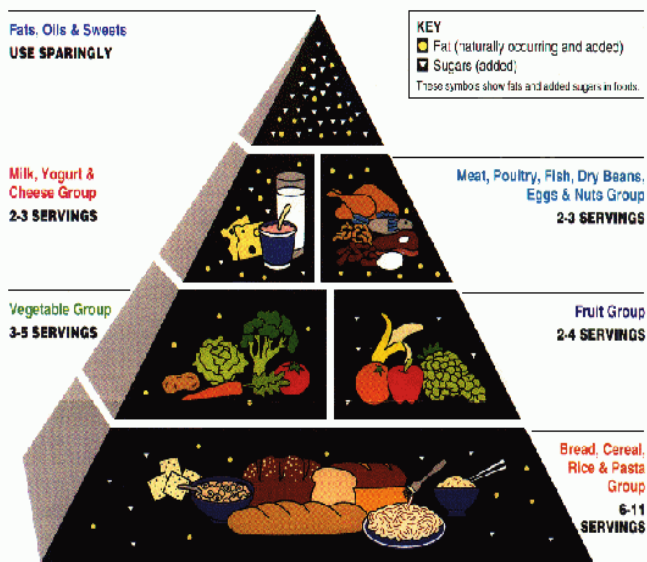
Helpful Hints

- ◆ Avoid foods that are high in **fat**. Pastries, french-fries and other greasy foods will irritate the bowel.
- ◆ Avoid **gas-producing** foods such as carbonated beverages, cabbage, beans, broccoli, onions, peppers, and cucumbers.
- ◆ Avoid other foods that cause **irritation**— spicy foods, caffeine, alcohol, and cigarettes can all stimulate painful bowel spasms.
- ◆ Avoid foods that have a **laxative** effect. Coffee, fruit juices, milk and dairy products can all contribute to diarrhea.
- ◆ Increase **fiber** to prevent constipation and promote regular bowel movements. Gradually add more fiber-rich fruits, vegetables and whole-grain foods to your diet. Choose wisely so as not to cause gas and bloating. Consider fiber supplements such as bran or psyllium (Metamucil®).
- ◆ Drink plenty of **water**, at least six or eight 8-oz. servings per day.
- ◆ Eat meals at regular times, chew foods slowly, and avoid overeating to prevent distress.



SAMPLE MENUS

<p><i>Breakfast:</i></p> <p>Whole grain cereal (oatmeal, raisin bran) Milk (if tolerated) or soymilk Banana Caffeine-free tea, coffee</p> <p><i>Snack:</i></p> <p>Peanut butter and whole-grain crackers</p> <p><i>Lunch:</i></p> <p>Sandwich on whole-grain bread with lettuce and tomato Carrots Orange</p> <p><i>Snack:</i></p> <p>Low-fat yogurt (if tolerated) or soy yogurt</p> <p><i>Dinner:</i></p> <p>Broiled lean meat, chicken or fish Steamed vegetables Brown rice pilaf Whole-grain dinner roll or bread Caffeine-free tea or coffee</p> <p><i>Dessert:</i></p> <p>Angel food cake with berries</p>	<p><i>Breakfast:</i></p> <p>Whole-grain pancakes or waffles Yogurt (if tolerated) or soy yogurt Sliced peaches Caffeine-free tea, coffee</p> <p><i>Snack:</i></p> <p>Trail mix</p> <p><i>Lunch:</i></p> <p>Soup with vegetables, pasta and beans Green salad with low-fat dressing Whole-grain crackers, breadsticks, or rolls Apple</p> <p><i>Snack:</i></p> <p>Fruit juice "popsicle"</p> <p><i>Dinner:</i></p> <p>Pasta with lean meat sauce and parmesan cheese Steamed vegetables Garlic bread Caffeine-free tea or coffee</p> <p><i>Dessert:</i></p> <p>Pudding made with lactose-free milk</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------



Let the Pyramid be your guide as you choose foods that provide all the nutrients you need for good health.

Increase fiber slowly over a period of several weeks, along with plenty of water throughout the day.

Make note of foods that you can and cannot tolerate.