


LIVING WITH IBD AND IBS

Inflammatory bowel disease and irritable bowel syndrome can have a significant impact on quality of life. The dietary advice spelled out in this guide can give you the help you need to manage your condition.

An elderly couple, a man and a woman, are sitting together and looking at a document. The man is on the left, wearing a yellow and white striped shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing a light blue top. They are both smiling and appear to be engaged in a conversation about the document. The background is a bright, out-of-focus indoor setting.

The board-certified gastroenterologists at Beaufort Memorial have helped patients across our area live better lives with IBD and IBS, and they're here to help you. [Find a gastroenterologist](#) or call [843-773-5274](tel:843-773-5274) to schedule an appointment in Beaufort or Okatie. We also have a team of [registered dietitians](#) who can work with you to learn how to control your condition with food. Call [843-548-3612](tel:843-548-3612) to schedule an appointment.



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IBD VS. IBS

Both digestive diseases share similar symptoms, but they are distinct conditions. Learn the main differences.

INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE (IBD)

WHAT IT IS:

IBD occurs when the immune system does not respond correctly to foreign organisms in the body, causing chronic inflammation of the gastrointestinal (GI) tract. Two primary types of IBD are Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

CAUSE:

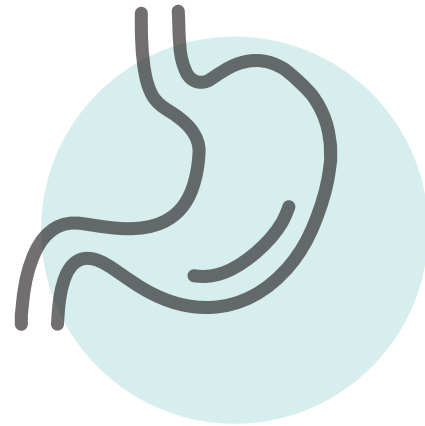
The direct cause of IBD is unknown. You may be more likely to develop IBD if you have a family history of the disease.

SYMPTOMS:

Blood in the stools, diarrhea, fatigue, stomach pain, weight loss

TREATMENTS:

Medications, including short-term use of steroids or antibiotics, and, less commonly, surgery to remove damaged parts of the GI tract



IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME (IBS)

WHAT IT IS:

IBS is a disorder in which problems with how the brain and gut work together lead to unpleasant digestive symptoms. Unlike IBD, IBS is not caused by inflammation.

CAUSE:

As with IBD, the direct cause of IBS is unknown. You may be more likely to get IBS if you have a family history of the disease, a bacterial infection in your digestive tract or food intolerances.

SYMPTOMS:

Bloating, constipation, diarrhea, stomach pain, white mucus in stool

TREATMENTS:

Dietary changes, probiotics, medications that treat diarrhea and constipation, and psychological treatments that can help manage symptoms or prevent flare-ups



The [board-certified gastroenterologists](#) at Beaufort Memorial can help you determine whether your symptoms result from IBD or IBS. Call [843-773-5466](tel:843-773-5466) to schedule an appointment.

4 TIPS FOR MANAGING IBD

Although there is no cure for inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), an appropriate diet is essential to reducing flare-ups and enjoying a high quality of life.

Getting diagnosed with Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis or other form of IBD may feel like a relief — you finally know what's causing your intestinal symptoms. But it also means that you will need to make some major changes to your diet. A gastroenterologist and registered dietitian can both be immensely helpful in making these changes. Here are a few things to consider before discussing dietary changes with them:

1. Consider an elimination diet. What you eat has a profound impact on how well your IBD is managed. While there is no single diet recommended for managing IBD, your gastroenterologist or dietitian may recommend avoiding certain foods or ingredients to help control symptoms. Some common diets for people with IBD include:

- Diets low in fiber, fat and/or salt
- Gluten-free diet, in which gluten, a protein found in wheat, barley, rye and triticale (a wheat-rye hybrid), is excluded
- Low-FODMAP diet, which eliminates fermentable oligosaccharides, disaccharides, monosaccharides and polyols (FODMAP), types of sugar that the intestines don't always absorb well
- Low- or no-carbohydrate diets that eliminate processed foods, grains, sugar and lactose (a sugar found in dairy products)
- Mediterranean diet, which focuses on whole, unprocessed foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean protein sources, such as fish and beans

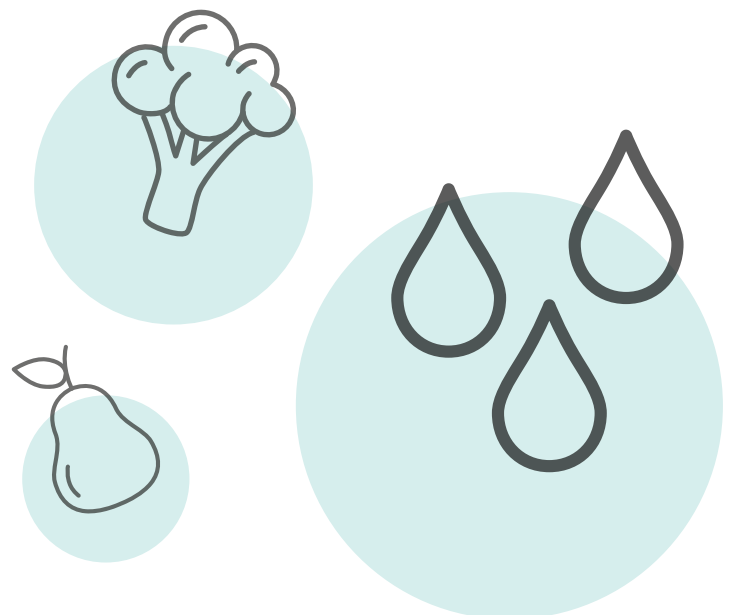
Before starting any diet, discuss it with your doctor. Some diets, particularly those that eliminate entire food groups, could lead to nutrient deficiencies, and your doctor may recommend a supplement while you are on the diet.

2. Plan, plan and plan some more. Planning meals and snacks can be beneficial for a number of reasons. You'll always have healthy foods on hand that won't lead to flare-ups, and eating at regular intervals may be easier on your digestive system. If you adopt a specific diet, a dietitian can help you develop a meal plan that works with your tastes and lifestyle.

3. Identify trigger foods. Not everyone with IBD reacts to the same foods. When you first get diagnosed, keep a food journal and note which foods cause pain, diarrhea and other unpleasant symptoms. Some common foods and drinks that cause trouble for those with IBD include:

- Alcoholic and caffeinated beverages
- Foods and drinks high in sugar
- Milk and other dairy products
- Sodas and other carbonated drinks
- Spicy foods

4. Drink plenty of water. If you experience diarrhea frequently, dehydration may be a concern. Water is the best beverage for preventing dehydration, not only because it is essential for good health and has zero calories, but it won't cause flare-ups, as other beverages — such as coffee, sodas and sugary fruit juices — may.



IBS AND YOUR DIET

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) symptoms can arise when you least expect them. Finding your triggers can help you keep them under control.

IBS can be a frustrating condition that, currently, researchers consider to be linked strongly to nutrition, although it can also be influenced by stress.

If you live with IBS, here are a few dietary considerations for optimal health and well-being.

TRACK YOUR TRIGGERS — AND REACTIONS

IBS symptoms may show up only when you eat certain things, and they may surface at unexpected moments (see “More Than Food”). That’s why a food and symptom diary can help.

Get a journal and write down everything you eat and when you experience uncomfortable symptoms. Note, for instance, if you consumed dairy products, spicy foods or fried foods or whether you had a particularly stressful day, and specify what symptoms you had. Once you learn your triggers, it’s easier to avoid them — and their accompanying side effects.

FIBER INTAKE MATTERS

With IBS, not eating enough fiber can lead to bloating and gas. Eat too much, and you may notice other symptoms, such as diarrhea. Generally, adults should get between 22 and 34 grams of fiber daily, but you may need to adjust yours to a level that keeps your symptoms from flaring up. Keeping a food diary can help here, as well. Diets high in meat and dairy are generally lacking in fiber, whereas fruits, vegetables and beans, although healthy, may contain more fiber than you can comfortably handle.

COMFORT OVER FLAVOR

One of the most unpleasant parts of treating IBS is giving up foods you enjoy. But if your favorite treat has you doubled over in pain, ask yourself which is more important: long-term comfort or temporary flavor?

YOU MAY NEED A BOOST

In some cases, eliminating trigger foods from your diet can cause you to miss out on important nutrients, such as vitamin B12 and iron. To prevent them, you may need a dietary supplement.

IS IT IBS?

If your stomach pains and frequent diarrhea are accompanied by fever, it may be inflammatory bowel disease. Your gastroenterologist can help you differentiate between the two conditions.



MORE THAN FOOD

Food isn’t the only thing that can cause IBS symptoms. Medications, stress and even hormones can trigger digestive issues associated with the condition. That’s why food and symptom diaries are so helpful.

If you suspect a medication is causing IBS symptoms, you can request an alternative treatment method. If stress brings on your symptoms, talk with your primary care provider about the best ways to manage your stressors. You may benefit from counseling or relaxation training. For women, a gynecologist may be able to suggest treatments to alleviate symptoms brought on by hormonal changes.



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