

First Line Dietary Advice for Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS).

Your doctor has given you a diagnosis of Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS). IBS can be treated with changes to your diet and lifestyle. IBS advice found on the Internet is confusing. For most people with IBS the dietary changes recommended on this sheet, if applied consistently, will help manage your symptoms without having to undertake specialist diets.

Look through this check list and tick off anything you are doing already. Then plan how you will make the changes to do things you are not doing. You will need to make any changes for at least 2-3 weeks to determine if they are helping. If you need to make a lot of changes, you may want to just make a few at a time, so working through all the changes may take several months.

You will need to keep a food and symptom record while you make change. It should include:

- Which change(s) you are focusing on at this time
- What foods you are eating, with estimations of amounts.
- How often your bowels are opening each day – “Normal” can vary from 3 times per day to 3 times per week. Normal bowel motions are not painful and take little effort.
- What form the bowel motions are : Normal bowel motions are No. 3-5 on the Bristol Stool Chart¹
- Any other symptoms and their severity on a scale of 0-10. Symptoms might include; pain, X nausea, bloating or wind. Some people suffer urgency, which means they must rush to the toilet. Zero is no symptoms, and 10 is the worst ever or most severe.
- Anything you suspect that might have triggered symptoms e.g. unexpected bad news, different diet, travel or exams.

Recommendations for all people with IBS

I do this already	Working on this	Date started:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Eat three meals a day at regular times.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Avoid skipping meals.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Avoid eating within 1-2 hours of sleep.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Eat slowly, chewing your food well.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Drink at least 8 cups of fluid per day.(Does not include alcohol or drinks with caffeine)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Limit alcohol to no more than 2 standard drinks per day and have at least two days a week without alcohol.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Limit caffeine containing drinks to less than 3 cups per day (including tea, coffee, energy drinks, and fizzy drinks).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Limit high fat foods, such as chips, pies, fried foods, pizza, creamy sauces, cheese, cheesy sauces chocolate and fatty meats* *Reduce how often you eat these foods by at least half current amount.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Limit fruit juice to no more than ½ cup (125ml) per day.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Limit fruit to no more than 3 portions per day (a portion is what fits into the palm of the hand).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Make time for physical activity. Aim for a minimum of 150 minutes per week of moderate activity, preferably spread across the week. Activity can be broken into 10 minute bursts
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		If stressed, work on strategies to manage your feelings - mindfulness, yoga, breathing exercises, meditation, relaxation tapes, and

¹ Bristol Stool Chart (<https://www.continence.org.au/pages/bristol-stool-chart.html>)

I do this already	Working on this	Date started:	
			acupuncture or counselling may help. Health Navigator is a good resource for information on stress management ² .

For people who have bloating and wind as the main symptoms of their IBS

I do this already	Working on this	Date started:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Avoid sugar-free chewing gum, mints and sweets that contain sorbitol, mannitol or xylitol.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Limit fizzy drinks and sparkling water.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Limit dried beans and legumes
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Limit “windy” vegetables such as brussels sprouts, cauliflower or onion to no more than one small serving (80g) per day

For people who have diarrhoea as the main symptoms of their IBS

I do this already	Working on this	Date started:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Replace fluids lost from diarrhoea by drinking plenty of water. Judge your hydration based on urine colour – dark urine is a sign of dehydration
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Limit caffeine containing drinks to less than 3 cups per day, including strong tea, coffee, energy drinks, and fizzy drinks.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		If you are eating high fibre cereals and breads (more than 6g fibre per 100g), swap to white bread and lower fibre cereal for 2-3 weeks. If your symptoms improve on lower fibre then slowly increase the amount of fibre to find how much fibre you can tolerate.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Avoid sugar-free chewing gum, mints and sweets that contain sorbitol, mannitol or xylitol.

For people who have constipation as the main symptoms of their IBS

Do NOT add extra wheat bran to your food – this will make constipation worse in most people.			
I do this already	Working on this	Date started:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		If you eat mostly white bread and low fibre cereals (less than 3g fibre per 100g), add more fibre, including wholegrains, oats and wholemeal bread
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Add 1 tablespoon of ground linseeds to either yogurt or cereal each day

² Health Navigator (<https://www.healthnavigator.org.nz/health-a-z/s/stress/>)

Complementary and alternative options for IBS symptoms

I do this already	Working on this	Date started:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Take peppermint oil capsules 3 per day with meals for two weeks or as directed. If symptoms improve gradually reduce dose to minimum effective dose to prevent symptoms.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Probiotic supplements may help with IBS, but their beneficial effects are unproven in research trials. If you wish to try a probiotic choose a capsule form that has as many different types of bacteria as possible with a minimum bacterial count of 100 million bacteria per dose. Take as directed for at least 4 weeks and ensure that the supplement is stored correctly both before and after purchase.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		Try fermented food products daily such as yogurt, sourdough bread kimchi, sauerkraut, kefir, kombucha, miso or tempeh. These food contain probiotic compounds that may help with IBS, but their beneficial effects are unproven in research trials.

I have made all these changes and I still have major problems with my IBS, what should I do?

Bring a food and symptom diary that shows the effect of following these recommendations for a minimum of 4 weeks to your GP to show them what you have tried. Your doctor will then consider onward referral based on local pathways of care.

I have started low FODMAP and I can't tell if it is helping or not, what should I do?

If a low FODMAP diet is not clearly effective after 4 weeks it is unlikely to help. If you have had some improvement in your symptoms on low FODMAP it is important to reintroduce those foods you have eliminated one at a time to determine your level of tolerance. A low FODMAP diet is not nutritionally complete so should not be maintained over a long period.

If you are uncertain you are following a low FODMAP diet correctly, we recommend you take a step back and work through the recommendations on this sheet keeping a food and symptom diary. If after 4 weeks, despite following these recommendations you still have significant symptoms, speak to your GP who will refer you on based on local pathways of care.

REMEMBER: This diet sheet is for the management of IBS only. Should you develop any of these symptoms during the use of this diet you should speak to your GP:

- Bleeding from your bowel (Rectal bleeding)
- Unplanned weight loss
- Waking from sleep because of symptoms.
- If you have had previous bowel surgery and you develop severe bloating and pain.

This sheet is endorsed as good practice by SDHB gastroenterology, the SDHB Dietitians and WellSouth Dietitians in October 2017

Bristol Stool Chart

Type 1		Separate hard lumps, like nuts (hard to pass)
Type 2		Sausage-shaped but lumpy
Type 3		Like a sausage but with cracks on the surface
Type 4		Like a sausage or snake, smooth and soft
Type 5		Soft blobs with clear-cut edges
Type 6		Fluffy pieces with ragged edges, a mushy stool
Type 7		Watery, no solid pieces. Entirely Liquid