

Irritable bowel syndrome – child

Patient education

What is irritable bowel syndrome?

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a collection of symptoms affecting the gastrointestinal tract (GI tract).

The body sends signals back and forth between the intestines and the brain to regulate how the GI tract works. If your child has IBS, these signals may be disrupted. As a result, the GI tract does not function normally. The intestines may become more sensitive and react inappropriately to certain stimuli.

The four types of IBS are listed below:

- IBS with diarrhea
- IBS with constipation
- Mixed IBS
- Unsubtyped IBS

What causes irritable bowel syndrome?

The cause of IBS is unknown.

What increases the risks?

- Your child has a family history of IBS
- Your child has a mental health condition
- Your child has experienced food poisoning in the past

What are the potential symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome?

- Diarrhea, constipation or both
- Swelling or bloating of the abdomen
- Feeling full after a small/regular sized meal
- Constant passing of gas
- Mucus in stool
- Incomplete emptying after a bowel movement

**Symptoms typically appear suddenly and go.*

How to treat irritable bowel syndrome:

- Making changes to your diet:
 - Avoid foods that cause symptoms
 - Increase water consumption
 - Follow a low-FODMAP (fermentable oligosaccharides, disaccharides, monosaccharides, and polyols) diet.
 - Consume more fiber
 - Eat regular-sized meals at the same times
- Medicines
 - Fiber supplements
 - Antidiarrheal medicine
 - Antispasmodic medicine
- Therapy
- Working with a dietitian
- Managing your stress

If your child has been diagnosed with irritable bowel syndrome, please contact your doctor or health care provider immediately if they are experiencing any of the following:

- Is not growing
- Has bleeding from the rectum
- Suffers from chronic pain
- Difficulty swallowing
- Vomits
- Has diarrhea at night

If your child has been diagnosed with irritable bowel syndrome, please get help immediately if they are experiencing any of the following:

- Has severe pain
- Experiences a fever
- Has bloody/black stools
- Has severe abdominal bloating
- Cannot stop vomiting
- Feels drowsy

Where can I get more information?

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) - Canadian Digestive Health

Website: <https://cdhf.ca/digestive-disorders/irritable-bowel-syndrome-ibs/>

Reference: Irritable bowel syndrome. (2021, June 14). Elsevier Inc: ClinicalKey for Nursing.

Retrieved from https://www.clinicalkey.com/nursing/#!/content/patient_handout/5-s2.0-pe_a4400e17-44b8-4538-ba32-67d3f5f13502