

## IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME (IBS)

# Symptoms

Each person, based on the type of irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) they have, will have different symptoms. In general, IBS can cause:

- Belly pain.
- Cramping in the stomach area.
- Gas.
- Bloating (or swelling) of the belly.
- Change in stool:
  - Diarrhea (loose stool).
  - Constipation (hard stool or trouble passing stool).
  - Urgent need to go.
- Sometimes, people with IBS pass mucus with their stool.

Each type of IBS can cause more specific, distinct symptoms.

- **IBS-D: IBS with Diarrhea**
  - You may often have loose stool.
  - You may often feel an urgent need to move your bowels.
  - You may often have cramps or belly pain.
- **IBS-C: IBS with Constipation**
  - You may find it hard to move your bowels.
  - You may not often move your bowels.
  - You may have urge to go but cannot go.
- **IBS-M: IBS Mixed**
  - You may have symptoms of both IBS-D and IBS-C.

*Note: Bleeding, fever, weight loss and severe pain that does not go away are not symptoms of IBS and may suggest other problems. **Talk to your doctor right away if you have these symptoms.***



If you think you may have IBS — you have these symptoms more than three times a month for more than three months and it is getting in the way of your normal life — talk to your doctor.

Speak up **early, completely** and **often**. Your doctor needs all the details of your symptoms to give you the best treatment plan.



## Preparing for Your Doctor's Visit

*These questions are a good start to keep in mind when trying to find causes of symptoms and give better details about how you are feeling to your doctor:*

- What are the main symptoms that are bothering you and how would you describe them?
  - Pain (steady, cramping, burning)? Where is the pain?
  - Diarrhea (loose stool) or constipation (hard stool or trouble passing stool) or both?
- Do you feel pain or bloating (swelling) before, during or after you move your bowels? Or is there no pain with bowel movements?
- Nausea or throwing up?
- What makes your symptoms worse? (Be prepared to give details.)
  - Eating (what type, how often)?
  - Stress (what type)?
  - Physical activity?
  - Females: menstrual cycle (period)?
- What medicines are you taking for your symptoms and which ones help or don't help?

