

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)



Overview

This chronic condition affects your large intestine. With it, your bowels are hypersensitive. You may need to use the restroom frequently and urgently. This can be uncomfortable and embarrassing. It can interfere with your daily life.

Causes and Triggers

Doctors don't understand the exact cause of IBS. It may be linked to a problem with the way your brain communicates with your digestive system. It may be linked to problems with the muscle contractions that help pass food through your digestive tract. Genetics may play a role in IBS. It may be related to bacteria in your intestines. Irritable bowel syndrome can be triggered by a variety of foods. It can also be triggered by stressful life events. Triggers may vary from person to person.

Symptoms

Symptoms may include abdominal pain and cramping. You may feel bloated and you may have excessive gas. You may have diarrhea or constipation. You may also have mucus in your stool. These symptoms may come and go.

Treatment

Treatment options include medications and lifestyle changes. You may benefit from exercise. You may benefit from reducing your stress levels, and from avoiding foods that trigger your IBS. Your healthcare provider can create a care plan that is right for your needs.

