

# What is Irritable Bowel Syndrome?

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) is a common, chronic gastrointestinal condition defined by disturbances in bowel habits and abdominal pain

## Common symptoms of IBS



### Cramping

cramping may vary in intensity, from mild light cramping to intense sharp stabbing pains

### Bloating

typically after a meal or related to passing a bowel movement or as a result of constipation

### Constipation

Generally, constipation is when stools don't pass often enough (less than three times per week). Having hard stools that are difficult to pass or the feeling of an incomplete bowel movement

### Diarrhea

altered bowel habits and trigger foods may lead to chronic or recurrent diarrhea

### Gas & Flatulence

difficulty getting rid of gas, possibly because of how the nerves and muscles in the gut are working, or intestinal sensitivity meaning even a normal amount of gas causes pain

### Abdominal Pain

frequent abdominal pain, with pain being often associated with alterations in bowel movements (diarrhea, constipation, or both). Pain may also be caused by an increased sensitivity to gas

### UK Statistics

**Between 1 and 2 in ten people in the UK are thought to have IBS**

IBS is the most common diagnosis made by gastroenterologists worldwide. The incidence and prevalence of IBS vary depending on the diagnostic criteria used but it is estimated that the prevalence in the UK is 17% overall, with a prevalence of 11% among men and 23% among women (1). Onset of symptoms is most common between the ages of 20 and 30 and it is important to get any changes checked out.

### Diet & Nutrition

**Food is the first line of prevention and management of IBS**

The foods we eat play an important role in supporting gut health and related conditions. BANT nutrition practitioners assess and identify potential nutritional imbalances to understand how these may contribute to an individual's symptoms and health concerns. There is no cure or singular treatment for IBS, however it can be successfully supported with dietary and lifestyle recommendations to manage frequency and severity of symptoms and occurrence.



(1) <https://www.bjnp.org/content/irritable-bowel-syndrome-primary-care-physicians>