DOOR STEP NUTRITION

April 2026

Irritable Bowel Syndrome Awareness Month

April is Irritable Bowel Syndrome Awareness Month.

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a condition that affects your gastrointestinal (GI) tract. The common IBS symptoms you may experience include frequent abdominal pain, cramping, diarrhea, constipation, gas, and bloating. IBS may greatly affect your ability to do daily activities, which may lead to stress, anxiety, and depression.

There is no cure for IBS, but medications and dietary changes may help manage symptoms and improve your quality of life.

Your goal is to eat as close to a normal diet as possible while minimizing your GI symptoms. Certain foods may worsen your IBS symptoms. Necessary diet changes will depend on the symptoms you are experiencing. IBS affects individuals differently.

TIPS

· Eat small, frequent meals and snacks throughout the day. Large meals may worsen your symptoms.

· Eat slowly and chew food well to help with digestion and reduce gas and bloating.

· Slowly increase fiber in your diet from fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, beans, and lentils as tolerated. You may have to modify fiber by removing skins and seeds, or by cooking and/or pureeing to help improve tolerance.

· Take fiber supplements if recommended by your medical team to help with constipation and/or diarrhea.

· Increase your fluid intake as you increase fiber intake.

· Drink fluids throughout the day to stay hydrated. The general recommendation is to drink 8 cups (64 ounces) of fluids daily.

Note: You may need to limit how much fluid you consume with meals, especially if diarrhea is your main symptom. Sip fluids gradually throughout the day.

· Choose lactose-free dairy products or fortified dairy alternatives if lactose makes your IBS symptoms worse. Examples of these products include soy-based, almond-based, and coconut milk-based products.

· Limit high fat, fried, greasy, oily, and spicy foods, carbonated beverages, caffeine, and alcohol if these worsen your symptoms.

· Work with an RDN when following short-term elimination diets recommended by your medical team. Your doctor can refer you to an RDN.

· Try to incorporate daily physical activity, deep breathing exercises, and mindfulness practices such as yoga and meditation to help with symptom management.