



**Irritable
bowel
syndrome**

Irritable bowel syndrome

It is a functional bowel disorder with three key markers:

- * abdominal pain, abdominal distension & disturbance of bowel habit.
- * An abdominal pain is associated with defecation. A pain can occur any where in the abdomen , often central or left sided , mostly located in lower quadrant of the abdomen. This pain sometime may ease following bowel movement or passage of wind.
- * A change in bowel habit means an altered defecation, either constipation or diarrhoea with associated bloating. This bloating sometimes so sever that the clothes have to be loosened.

*A morning rush is common where the patient feels an urgent desire to defecate several times after getting up in the morning & following breakfast, after which the bowel may settle. There may be a feeling of incomplete emptying after a bowel movement. The motion is often loose & semiformed rather than watery.

*All these symptoms appear to be linked with hyperactivity of small intestine and colon in response to food ingestion. There is also mucus that tends to be visible on stool but never blood.

Nausea sometimes occurs but vomiting is less common.

Stress and anxiety appears to play a role and can precipitate and exacerbate symptoms.

Caffeine often worsens symptoms. The sweeteners sorbitol and fructose, the milk and dairy products, chocolate, onions and garlic all are aggravating factors for IBS.

Referral

- Children (difficulty in diagnosis in such age)
- Older person with no history of IBS (this is because IBS often develop in young adult life)
- Pregnant women
- Blood in stool
- Unresponsive to medication

Management

Antispasmodics: Mebeverine, alverine citrate, peppermint oil and hyoscin N-butyl bromide.

They work by a direct effect on the smooth muscle of the gut, causing relaxation, thus reducing abdominal pain. (Improvement within a few days).

- **Mebeverine HCl** should give before meals as OTC drug. It is not recommended for pregnant women and during breast feeding, the same for Alverine citrate.
- **peppermint oil** used as an aid to digestion and has an antispasmodic effect. It is not recommended for children.
- **Hyoscin N-butyl bromide** can cause dry mouth and constipation, best avoided with anticholinergic drug example TCA, antihistamine and neuroleptic.