

IBS solutions

If you have tummy troubles you may be among the 20 per cent of Australians suffering from irritable bowel syndrome or IBS. Naturopath, **Caroline Robertson**, outlines a six step process to help your stomach smile.

Stomach cramps, bloating, nausea, diarrhoea, constipation and fatty stools are common IBS symptoms. But these can also occur with inflammatory bowel disease, thyroid disorders, candida, giardia and colon cancer, so it's best to visit your healthcare professional for a diagnosis. Also IBS can continue indefinitely if mismanaged.

Six steps to IBS relief

The key to overcoming IBS is the discipline to avoid allergens, eat mindfully, relax and take appropriate complementary medicines consistently. All my IBS clients have benefitted from the following six step process.

1 Exterminate aliens

Remove parasites, amoebas, fungus and toxins contributing to gut inflammation and intestinal permeability with a combination of wormwood, black walnut hulls, grapefruit seed extract, barberry, gentian and pumpkin seeds. Ask a Go Vita health specialist for the best product for you.

2 Cleanse the colon

Next flush out toxins with magnesium oxide for two consecutive nights. Then take aloe vera juice for a week. This mild laxative softens stools, heals gut lining and removes residual candida. It's anti-inflammatory and immune-boosting qualities also reduce gut sensitivities seen in IBS.

3 Eliminate allergens

Every IBS sufferer has particular food foes. Along with food allergy testing, an easy and accurate way to identify allergens is to remove them from your diet for a week and reintroduce them with awareness.

Common irritants include lactose, gluten, legumes, brassicas, yeast, corn, soy, nuts, colours, preservatives, corn, fatty foods, carrageenan, artificial flavors and sweeteners.

Stimulants should be reduced including cigarettes, caffeine, cocoa, chili and alcohol.

Sugars tend to feed IBS. A low FODMAP diet has been shown to reduce IBS symptoms by 60-80 per cent. For a complete list go to livinghappywithibs.com and select low FODMAP food list.

4 Focus on what you eat and how you eat

The following foods enhance absorption, evacuation and minimise post meal moans.

- Fennel seeds, in tea, foods or as oil massaged over the tummy reduces gas.
- Peppermint leaf as tea, oil or capsules, have been shown to reduce every symptom associated with IBS.
- Slivered ginger root soaked in apple cider vinegar promotes digestive enzymes and stops immune system hyperactivity.
- Fibre intake builds beneficial bacteria but too much can trigger diarrhoea and too little bogs up bowels. Soluble fibre soaks up liquid in your intestines, helping to prevent diarrhoea. Insoluble fibre in the stems of broccoli and cauliflower can be too irritating though blending them makes them more absorbable. Try soluble fibre sources such as dates, prunes, figs, carrots, squash, sweet potato and zucchini. Lubricate your gut lining with flax seed oil for softer stools. If you get constipated try psyllium as a bulking laxative.
- Probiotic foods like miso, tempeh, yoghurt, dosha and sauerkraut banish bad bacteria and heal the gut.
- Prebiotic rich foods such as bananas, garlic, honey and asparagus fertilise probiotic flora.
- Fruits are less likely to ferment when eaten alone and before 6pm. Try papaya, rich in papain, an enzyme that powers protein digestion and pineapple which contains anti-inflammatory bromelains.
- Sprouts are alkalising and alive with abundant enzymes which improve digestion.
- Bitter foods before a meal such as bitter melon boost digestion, banish bloat, and digest fat.
- Add anti-gas herbs like cumin, dill, mint and ginger to dishes.

5 Heal your gut

There are a number of complementary medicines important for gut health: **Turmeric:** A UK study over eight weeks found anti-inflammatory turmeric gave a 60 per cent improvement in IBS symptoms.

How you eat is as important as what you eat

Try these tips

- Don't eat after 6pm or three hours before bed
- Sit in an upright posture, breathing deeply
- Take digestive enzymes with each meal
- Chew each mouthful 20 times, limiting talking
- Sip warm water
- Take a stroll after dinner
- Try to burp
- Gently massage your stomach between meals


Fish oil: EPA and DHA omega-3 fatty acids at 2gm daily help lubricate the digestive tract and reduce inflammation.

Boswellia: Boswellia is a powerful anti-inflammatory herb that can eliminate inflammation completely. Studies show 80 per cent of the people taking boswellia had their IBS and colitis symptoms disappear.

Slippery elm: This soothing mucilage heals gut inflammation and softens stools.

Probiotics: *Lactobacillus plantarum*, *Bifidobacterium infantis* and *Saccharomyces boulardii* improve abdominal pain, bloating, stool frequency and constipation at 20 billion per dose. Probiotics reinforce the intestinal wall, decreasing permeability, inflammation and bacteria, they also stimulate immunity.

6 Dissolve stress

IBS sufferers often hold tummy tension. Therapies like meditation, yoga, craniosacral, acupuncture and reiki are recommended. Regular exercise is also important. Taking a daily quality multivitamin and mineral supplement can help avoid deficiencies that may accompany IBS. 

Naturopath Caroline Robertson offers consultations, health retreats and guided meditations www.carolinerobertson.com.au

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