

## Irritable Bowel Syndrome

Irritable bowel syndrome can cause pain and cramps, gas, diarrhea, or constipation. Bowel problems can be your body's reaction to the stresses and strains of daily life. Other causes are poor eating habits, such as skipping meals and eating food that is high in fat and low in fiber. Too much caffeine or alcohol and smoking can also cause irritable bowel syndrome.

### What to do:

1. Your doctor may prescribe medicine to help regulate bowel movements. Be sure to take your medicine at the right time and in the right amount.
2. Eat less fat. Do not eat fried food or food that has been seasoned with fatty meat.
3. Eat food with more fiber, such as fruit, vegetables, cereal, and whole grain bread.
4. Cut back on caffeine and alcohol.
5. Do not skip meals. Eat slowly and chew your food well.
6. Stop smoking or limit smoking.
7. Relax for 15 or 20 minutes after eating. If possible, make time to relax during the day to help reduce stress.
8. Exercise or walk every day to help regulate bowel movements and reduce stress.
9. Do not delay when you feel the need to have a bowel movement.

**Tell your doctor if diarrhea, gas, stomach cramps  
or constipation get worse.**

**Special Instructions** \_\_\_\_\_  
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