

**Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)** is a disorder affecting the gastrointestinal system which has no effective conventional medical therapy. It is an extremely painful and often embarrassing condition and is the most common of all digestive disorders. Affecting between 15 - 20% of the general population, it is estimated that there are around 9 million IBS sufferers in the UK alone. Research suggests that IBS exhibits predominance in women, with females representing over 70% of IBS sufferers.

## Symptoms of IBS

Typical symptoms of IBS include:

Abdominal pain such as cramping or spasms

Change in bowel habits

Excess mucous secretion in the stools

Increase in frequency of stools

Constipation

Indigestion and heartburn

Nausea

Diarrhoea

Anorexia

Bloating

Anxiety

Flatulence

Temporary pain relief after passing stool

Depression

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### The Digestive System: Function

Over a lifetime, the average person ingests more than 25 tons of food that provide nutrients for survival.

The gastrointestinal (GI) tract contains food from the time it is eaten until it is digested and absorbed or eliminated. Muscular contractions in the wall of the GI tract physically break down the food by churning it.

The contractions also help to dissolve foods by mixing them with the digestive fluids secreted into the tract. Enzymes secreted by accessory structures and cells that line the tract break down the food chemically, and then wavelike contractions of the smooth muscle in the wall of the GI tract propel the food along the tract, from the oesophagus to the anus. It is important to remember that food can also contain damaging viruses, bacteria and toxins.

The GI mucosal layer, whose surface covers more than 320 square metres, has the unique role of providing protection for the body and allowing only health-promoting nutrients, molecules and other substances into the body. In a perfect scenario, only the beneficial nutrients and phytonutrients are absorbed into the body, while nonbeneficial substances are excreted without interacting with the host cell at all.

**In basic terms, the digestive system can be split into six different functions:**

- 1) Ingestion
- 2) Secretion
- 3) Mixing and propulsion
- 4) Digestion
- 5) Absorption

6) Defecation

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### **Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) - Definition**

IBS is a functional bowel disorder of the GI tract characterised by recurrent abdominal pain and discomfort, bloating and alterations in bowel function, diarrhoea/constipation, or a combination of both, typically over months or years. The pathophysiology behind this disorder is not well understood. It is defined as a collection of intestinal symptoms in the absence of organic disease or underlying structural or biochemical abnormalities.

IBS is sometimes referred to as colitis, mucous colitis, spastic colon, spastic bowel or functional bowel disease; however, most of these terms are inaccurate. No link has been established between IBS and inflammatory bowel diseases such as Crohn's disease.

### **So what goes wrong?**

#### **Causes of IBS**

The aetiology of IBS is unknown, and there is no cure. Research to date indicates that several interacting factors contribute to the development of IBS:

Imbalanced gut flora

Microbial imbalance - yeast, parasitic or bacterial infection

Disturbed GI motility

Imbalanced neurotransmitters

Bowel inflammation which can lead to leaky gut

Food intolerance / hypersensitivity

Psychological factors such as stress, anxiety, depression, fatigue, anger and life stresses such as sexual or physical abuse

Dietary factors - including excess dietary fats, dairy products, coffee, alcohol and refined/heavily processed foods

Candidiasis - complicates IBS and increases food sensitivities

Low fibre diet

Laxative and antibiotic abuse

#### **Gut Flora**

Studies suggest that IBS patients have an imbalance of gut flora. This can be caused by a variety of factors; the most common being the over-use of antibiotics. Antibiotics indiscriminately kill both the good and bad bacteria in the GI tract, which leaves the defences down for the overgrowth of bacteria, parasites, candida and other fungal organisms. Research shows that treatment of abnormal gut flora with intensive probiotic therapy improves symptoms in patients with IBS.

#### **Stress and the brain-gut connection**

Because an organic cause has not been identified, IBS is often thought to be a result of emotional conflict or stress. There is strong evidence for a prominent role of stress in the development of IBS - it is fundamentally a disorder of colonic motility and because stress modulates GI motility, it may worsen or even trigger symptoms. Stress does not *cause* IBS, but it can exacerbate symptoms in a large proportion of IBS patients. Stress reduction and adrenal support may help relieve IBS symptoms in some people.

Stress also reduces levels of IgA which is the immune protection given to the gut lining, and this is one reason why stress can make the condition worse.

Researchers have also found that women with IBS may have more symptoms during their menstrual periods, suggesting that reproductive hormones can increase IBS symptoms.

### **Dietary Factors**

Dietary factors can trigger symptoms of IBS, with the strength of the response often related to the caloric density of a meal and especially the amount of fat in a meal, which is a strong stimulus of colonic contractions. Certain medicines and foods may also trigger spasms in some people. Chocolate, dairy products or large amounts of alcohol are frequent offenders.

Caffeine causes loose stools in many people, but it is more likely to affect those with IBS.

### **Food Intolerance & Leaky Gut Syndrome**

Leaky gut syndrome occurs when the gut walls become inflamed, and can no longer provide an effective barrier to stop partially digested food elements entering the blood stream. These can be attacked by the body's immune system to produce an allergic reaction, and this type of reaction is called a sub-acute immune response, leading to fatigue, toxicity, and low immune system.

## **Identify and Remove Obstacles to Healthy Function**

### **Parasites**

Parasites are organisms that live within the digestive tract and other parts of the body. They grow by feeding off the body. They can range from visible pin worms, or they may be invisible, microscopic organisms such as Giardia lamblia. Common symptoms of parasite infestation are diarrhoea and abdominal pain, nausea, gas, bloating, constipation and mucous in the stools. Parasitic infection can also cause irritation to the lining of the intestines which can contribute to a leaky gut.

### **Low fibre diets**

The popularity of highly-processed, fast convenience foods means that many people's diets are fibre-deficient. As bowel regularity is highly dependent on optimal amounts of fibre in the diet, a lack of fibre can make a significant contribution to the symptoms of IBS. Increasing fibre in the diet or taking a fibre supplement can help to increase motility and cleanse the colon. Some forms of fibre can be too harsh, depending on the intensity of symptoms. reaction releases IgG antibodies to specific food elements, causing food intolerance. The bloodstream is also susceptible to invasion by bacteria, fungi and parasites that, in a healthy state would not be able to penetrate the protective barrier of the gut. A leaky gut also means that nutrients cannot be absorbed properly which can lead to bloating, flatulence and cramping - symptoms which are typically associated with IBS. Patients with IBS often present with a leaky gut.

### **Candida Albicans**

Candida albicans is a type of yeast that lives naturally and in harmony with our intestines. It is kept in check by the beneficial bacteria that coexist with it. However, under certain circumstances, it can become what is known as an

'opportunistic pathogen' and produce a wide array of symptoms. An overgrowth of candida can be an underlying cause of leaky gut, which in turn, can cause a multitude of symptoms associated with IBS such as stomach cramps, flatulence and food intolerance.

## Treatment Strategies

The complex nature of IBS means that a multi-faceted approach is needed to manage this difficult condition. The 4R GI restoration programme is designed to restore all areas of gastrointestinal function by targeting the underlying causes of IBS#

Following a Clinical Kinesiology Diagnostic test it is possible to identify the exact pathogenic agent present in the system, and prescribe treatment.

1) **Remove** focuses on eliminating pathogenic bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasites, and other environmentally derived toxic substances from the GI tract. CK Testing is an effective way to determine presence of any pathogens -

Remove also applies to dietary modification, since foods to which a patient is intolerant or allergic can exacerbate GI dysfunction and stimulate immune and inflammatory responses systemically. The most cost-effective and accurate avenue to determine food allergy is an oligoantigenic diet, containing only those foods known to pose little risk of an allergic or intolerant reaction. Several studies have shown that avoidance of the suspected foods leads to substantial improvement in clinical symptoms; therefore oligoantigenic diets are typically part of Remove.

2) **Replace** refers to the replenishment of enzymes and other digestive factors lacking or in limited supply in an individual's GI environment. Other digestive factors that may need to be replaced include hydrochloric acid and intrinsic factor, normally produced by the parietal cells in the stomach wall. HCl production is dependent on zinc; therefore HCl deficiency may indicate a zinc deficiency. CK diagnosis can give an accurate picture of a patient's status of important digestive factors.

3) **Reinoculate** refers to the reintroduction of friendly bacteria, or 'probiotics,' into the intestine to re-establish microflora balance. In addition to directly reintroducing bacteria, indirectly bolstering the reinoculation process with prebiotics may also be beneficial. CDSA can determine patient's levels of friendly bacteria.

4) **Repair** refers to providing support for the healing and regeneration of the GI mucosa. Pre- and post- testing for intestinal permeability with lactulose/mannitol combinations can be performed to evaluate the intestinal barrier function. Once the need for gut repair has been established, nutrients that play pivotal roles in GI mucosal integrity or epithelial cell differentiation, growth and functioning should be considered.

If you suffer from IBS, there is an answer for you. To book your Clinical Kinesiology diagnostic test, and get on the road to perfect health, please call me on +442866328200, or email [info@lindaburke.co.uk](mailto:info@lindaburke.co.uk)