



Dear Dr. Hoo,

I have IBS and it has put a downer on my summer. HELP!!

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) is a bowel disorder that is characterized by sometimes severe abdominal pain with alterations in the frequency of bowel habits as well as the consistency such as diarrhea or constipation. This is not to be confused with Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) which includes conditions such as Chron's disease or Ulcerative colitis.

While the underlying cause of IBS was unknown for a long time, scientists now attribute the following as possible contributors to IBS: bacterial infection, antibiotic therapy, food allergies and/or sensitivities, stress, bacterial overgrowth (functional dyspepsia), and hormones.

It is not difficult to imagine then, with the above factors, how easily IBS can be misdiagnosed or mistreated. In light of the different underlying causes for IBS, the treatment would then vary depending on the identified cause(s).

For example, removing wheat, dairy, or sugar from the diet is often recommended to provide symptomatic relief and allow the gastric lining the opportunity to "settle" down. Other treatment options may include limiting dietary animal protein so as to minimize the amount of toxic metabolic by-products from these forms of protein or supporting the gut ecology by introducing beneficial bacterial or probiotics such as Lactobacillus or Bifidobacterium.

While removing the contributing factors to IBS is logical, additional support such as repairing the gastro-intestinal lining is also recommended. This can be achieved by using herbs such as aloe or de-glycyrrhized licorice as well as L-glutamine which is the primary source of fuel for the cells in the intestinal tract.

As always, a healthy dietary regimen with plenty water, rest and moderate exercise should be maintained along with nutritional supplementation. If you or a loved one is suffering from IBS, please consult with your healthcare provider to ensure that your healthcare goals are addressed or call us for further information.

Dr. Aaron Hoo

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