

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)

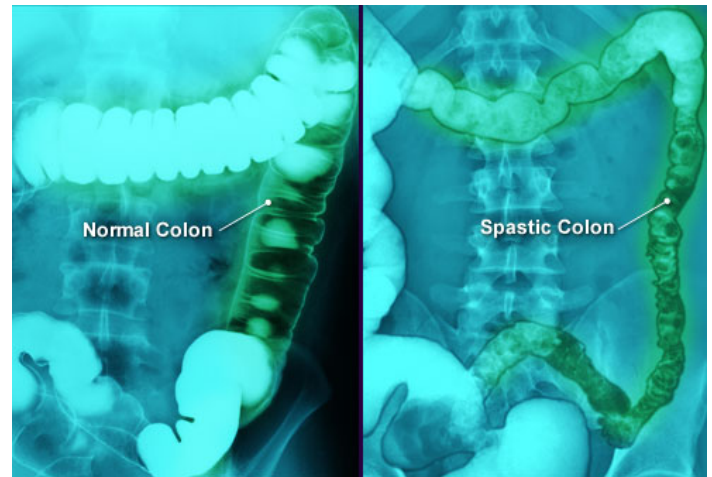
Irritable bowel syndrome is a disorder of the intestines. It is sometimes referred to as spastic colon, spastic colitis, or nervous stomach. The bowels may function abnormally but no structural abnormalities of the bowel are present with IBS.

Symptoms

The most common symptom is pain or discomfort in the abdomen, which is usually associated with abnormal bowel movements (either constipation or diarrhea). The abdominal pain is often described as crampy, sharp, dull, gas-like. Other symptoms may include mucus in the stool and abdominal bloating.

Main causes of IBS

It is not clear what causes IBS. Problems digesting certain foods, stress and anxiety, hormonal changes, hypersensitivity of the intestines, and problems with the way signals are sent between the brain and the digestive tract can all be triggers.



Treatment

Diet change. Avoiding foods that trigger IBS such as high fat and fried foods, and eating smaller meals help to manage the symptoms. Also, adding fiber to the diet if constipation is associated with IBS symptoms can help.

Medications are used in the form of neurologic pain medication to help gain relief when the symptoms are milder. Antidepressants and antispasmodics are used when the abdominal pain is more severe. Probiotics can also be used to help balance out the digestive system.

Stress Management is used to reduce abdominal discomfort and the psychological distress associated with IBS symptoms, improve coping skills, and help patients adapt to their symptoms.

For more information on Irritable Bowel Syndrome visit:

www.pelvicpain.org

www.gastro.org

www.aboutibs.org