

# Irritable Bowel Syndrome (Ibs)

## What Is Irritable Bowel Syndrome (Ibs)?

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a common digestive condition affecting approximately one in ten people. It is most prevalent in individuals aged 25 to 45, although it can develop at any age. Women are more commonly affected than men.

## Symptoms Of Irritable Bowel Syndrome (Ibs)

For a diagnosis of IBS, you must experience the following symptoms (ABC) for at least six months:

- **Abdominal pain or discomfort**
- **Bloating**
- **Change in bowel habit** (diarrhoea, constipation, or alternating between both)

## When Should Further Investigation Be Considered?

Referral for additional tests may be necessary if you experience any of the following:

- Unintentional or unexplained weight loss
- Rectal bleeding
- Family history of bowel or ovarian cancer
- Change in bowel habit to looser or more frequent stools for more than six weeks in people over 60 years old
- Anaemia
- Abdominal or rectal masses

- Raised inflammatory markers (which could indicate inflammatory bowel disease)

## Additional Symptoms Associated With Ibs

Alongside abdominal pain and bloating, you may also experience:

- Altered stool passage (straining, urgency, or feeling of incomplete evacuation)
- Symptoms worsening after eating
- Passing mucus in the stools

## How Is Irritable Bowel Syndrome (Ibs) Diagnosed?

Since IBS shares symptoms with other conditions, tests are required to rule out other possible causes. Common investigations include:

- **Full blood count (FBC)** – Checks for anaemia and other abnormalities
- **ESR (Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate) and CRP (C-Reactive Protein)** – Detects inflammation in the body
- **Coeliac disease antibody testing** – Rules out gluten intolerance as a possible cause of symptoms

## Treatment For Irritable Bowel Syndrome (Ibs)

There is no single cure for IBS, but treatment focuses on managing symptoms and improving quality of life.

### Lifestyle and dietary changes

- Incorporate relaxation time into your daily routine
- Increase physical activity levels

- Eat regular meals and take time to chew food properly
- Drink at least eight cups of fluid per day and limit caffeine intake to three cups daily
- Reduce fizzy drinks and alcohol consumption
- Avoid sorbitol, a sugar alcohol found in apples, pears, peaches, and prunes, which may worsen symptoms
- Adjust fibre intake – reducing fibre may help, but soluble fibre (ispaghula, oats, linseeds) may benefit those experiencing bloating and wind
- Referral to a dietitian may be recommended for tailored dietary advice

## Medications for IBS

- **Antispasmodic drugs** – Help relax muscle contractions in the bowel to relieve cramps
- **Laxatives** – Used for constipation, although lactulose should be avoided as it may worsen bloating
- **Loperamide** – Helps control diarrhoea
- **Low-dose tricyclic antidepressants** – May be considered if antispasmodics, laxatives, or anti-diarrhoeals are ineffective
- **Psychological therapies** – If symptoms persist after 12 months, treatments such as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) or gut-directed hypnotherapy may be beneficial

## Why Choose The Midlands Bowel Clinic?

- **Expert gastroenterologists and specialists** with extensive experience in diagnosing and treating IBS
- **Comprehensive diagnostic approach** to rule out other conditions and ensure accurate diagnosis

- **Personalised treatment plans** tailored to individual symptoms and lifestyle needs
- **Advanced dietary and lifestyle advice** to optimise gut health

## Contact Us

If you are experiencing ongoing digestive issues, bloating, or changes in bowel habits, contact us today for specialist diagnosis and treatment options.