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Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)

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Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)

What is Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)?

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a health issue in your intestines (gut). IBS can cause symptoms such as belly pain, cramping, gas, bloating (or swelling) of the belly and changes in stool. There are different types of IBS, so each person may not have the same symptoms.

- **IBS-D: IBS With Diarrhea**
 - You may often have loose stool.
 - You may often feel an urgent need to move your bowels.
 - You may often have cramps or belly pain.
- **IBS-C: IBS With Constipation**
 - You may find it hard to move your bowels.
 - You may not often move your bowels.
 - You may have an urge, but cannot go.
- **IBS-M: IBS Mixed**
 - You may have symptoms of both IBS-D and IBS-C.

If you think you may have IBS and have these symptoms more than three times a day for more than three months and it is getting in the way of your normal life, talk to your doctor. Speak up early, completely and often. Your doctor needs all the details of your symptoms to give you the best treatment plan.

Getting Tested

To find out if you IBS, your doctor will do a few tests. Mainly, the tests will show whether you have a different health issue, such as an infection, causing your symptoms. There is no single test to make the diagnosis of IBS. If no other issue is found to be causing your symptoms, it is likely IBS, but only your doctor can tell you for sure.

Your doctor will:

- Ask you about details of your symptoms.
- Do a physical exam, feeling your belly.
- Take your medical history to see if anyone in your family has other GI issues.

Your doctor may:

- Do a blood test.
- Do a stool test.

Based on the results of the blood or stool test, you may need other tests, such as a colonoscopy or endoscopy.

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