

Irritable Bowel Syndrome: Complementary/Alternative Medicine

Characterized by some combination of abdominal pain or distension
Altered bowel function, constipation, or diarrhea Hypersecretion of
colonic mucus

Dyspeptic symptoms (flatulence, nausea, anorexia) Varying degrees of
anxiety or depression

Outdated terms include: nervous indigestion, spastic colitis, mucous
colitis, and intestinal neurosis.

QUICK REVIEW

Irritable bowel syndrome is a functional disorder of the large
intestine with no evidence of accompanying structural defect.

The four major treatments from a natural perspective are:

- (1) increasing dietary fiber
- (2) eliminating allergenic foods
- (3) using enteric-coated volatile oil preparations
- (4) controlling psychological factors through stress reduction and
exercise.

Meals high in refined sugar can contribute to irritable bowel syndrome.

Enteric-coated peppermint oil is quite beneficial in relieving the
symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome.

The splenic flexure syndrome is a variant of the irritable bowel
syndrome in which gas in the bowel leads to pain in the lower chest or
the left shoulder

TREATMENT SUMMARY

The four primary areas of focus are increasing dietary fiber,
elimination of food allergens and sugar, enteric-coated volatile oils,
and controlling psychological factors through stress reduction and
regular exercise.

Diet

Increase intake of fiber-rich foods and eliminate allergenic foods,
refined sugar, and highly processed foods.

Nutritional Supplements

- *Lactobacillus acidophilus*: 1 to 2 billion live organisms per day
- Fiber: 3 to 5 grams per day at bedtime

Botanical Medicines

- Enteric-coated volatile oil preparations (e.g., peppermint oil): 0.2-
0.4 ml twice per day between meals

Physical Therapy

Daily, leisurely twenty-minute walks

Counseling

Develop an effective stress-reduction program. Biofeedback may be
particularly helpful.