

Could It Be Irritable Bowel Syndrome?

A guide for individuals and families navigating this condition

Brought to you by **Simply Gut Health**

What Is IBS?

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) is a common, functional gut disorder that affects how the gut moves and communicates with the brain. While it's not dangerous, it can be life-disrupting. If you've been dealing with long-term tummy troubles, this guide might help you understand more.

Common IBS Symptoms:

IBS symptoms vary widely from person to person, but may include:

- Abdominal pain or cramping (often relieved by going to the toilet)
- Bloating, sometimes severe
- Diarrhoea, constipation, or a mix of both
- Urgency to go to the toilet
- Mucus in the stool
- A feeling of incomplete emptying after going

You don't need to have all these symptoms to have IBS, and they may come and go in flares.

Could It Be Something Else?

IBS shares common symptoms with a range of other conditions and so it's important to get it checked by a medical specialist before assuming IBS. Especially if you have any of these symptoms

- Unexplained weight loss
- Bleeding from the bottom
- Family history of cancer

Questions to Ask Your GP

Making the most of your appointment can help get you the support you need. Consider asking:

- Could this be IBS, or might it be something else?
- Are there any tests I need to rule out other conditions?
- Should I try a diet or another approach?
- Are there any medications or over-the-counter options to help?
- Is there a specialist I can be referred to if symptoms continue?

Common IBS Triggers to Watch For

While everyone is different, some common triggers include:

- Stress & anxiety
- Caffeine or alcohol
- High-fat or fried foods
- Lack of sleep
- Certain medications (like antibiotics)
- Hormonal changes (e.g. menstrual cycle)
- Fermentable foods like onions, garlic, apples, and wheat

Keeping a symptom and food diary for a week or two can often help identify patterns.

The Different Subtypes of IBS

IBS is not one single condition—there are different types, depending on your main symptoms:

- IBS-C (Constipation-predominant): Hard or lumpy stools most of the time
- IBS-D (Diarrhoea-predominant): Loose or watery stools most of the time
- IBS-M (Mixed type): Alternating between constipation and diarrhoea
- IBS-U (Unclassified): Your symptoms don't clearly fit the other categories

Knowing your subtype can help guide treatment and support options.

It's Not Just in Your Head

IBS is now recognised as a gut-brain interaction disorder. That means your symptoms are real, even if test results are "normal." Stress, food, hormones, and gut sensitivity can all play a role.

We're Here When You're Ready

Whether you're looking for clarity, tools, or just someone to talk to who understands — our services include:

- 15-minute email consultations
- Full 60-minute consultations
- Support groups and resources
- Free guides just like this to help you feel more informed

We're not here to pressure you. We're here when you're ready.

