



MANAGING IBS

Better Together

An advice booklet for people with IBS,
from people with IBS

Brought to you by 

INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS IBS?

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) is more common than many people think, affecting around 1 in 3 of us.

When diagnosed, many of us will have felt a range of emotions from relief that we finally know what it is to frustration, anxiety and confusion. It can have a big impact so it's important to remember that steps can be taken to help you get back control.

The pain of IBS is caused by muscle spasms in the bowel and although symptoms can vary from person to person, the most common include abdominal pain and discomfort, diarrhoea and constipation and bloating of the abdomen.

Not sure if it's IBS?

Make sure that you visit your GP.
You can also find out more on our website:

www.buscopan.co.uk



WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM THIS BOOKLET

This booklet has been compiled to offer a range of pragmatic tips and bits of advice on how to cope with IBS from people who have been through it and experienced it themselves. So we would like to say a big thank you to all those who contributed in the hope that their own experience and the knowledge they have gained can allow others to better manage the symptoms. There's no 'miracle cure' so it's about finding what works for you and managing IBS better together. The topics will offer advice in a range of areas, including:

- *Psychological tips*
- *Food triggers and adjusting eating habits*
- *Breaking bad habits*
- *Difficult and embarrassing situations*
- *What sufferers wish they'd known when they were first diagnosed*
- *How to feel comfortable discussing your IBS*
- *Expert top tips*

READ ON TO FIND OUT WHAT THEY SAID... →

We asked over **1,000** sufferers to share with us their best piece of advice and top tips on how they manage to stay in control of IBS.

PSYCHOLOGICAL TIPS

“ It sounds simple but try making lists if you feel stressed – it really helps to put things into perspective and reduce feelings of stress and helplessness ” *Chris from Plymouth*

IBS can be mentally as well as physically draining. Learning to relax your mind and reduce stress (as much as you can!) is a good start - here are some tips to help:

“ Delegate. Don't be afraid to ask friends and family to take some of the things that worry you off your plate. It will help you to relax and in turn your IBS flare-ups should become less frequent. ” *James from Bedford*

“ Look upon the gut as an alarm signal, if it goes off, slow down and relax – don't push through your symptoms. You should take a break instead – catch up with a friend, walk the dog or do something creative. ” *Lucy from Manchester*



“ Relaxation exercises like yoga can really help. Just making a conscious effort to concentrate on keeping your body relaxed will help you to stay in control. ” *Ellen from Brighton*

“ Make sure at least one person knows so you have someone to rely on. When my symptoms flare up I know my mum will help me look after my children so I can concentrate on getting better. ” *Susie from Gloucester*

“ It can sometimes feel like IBS rules your life, but it doesn't have to be this way. By being proactive and learning all you can about your condition, you will feel much more in control. ” *Louise from Warwickshire*

Everyone's different and it's about finding something that works for you.

FOOD TRIGGERS &

ADJUSTING EATING HABITS

Certain foods and eating habits can play havoc on your tummy. Everyone's triggers are different, learning what those problem areas are for you and avoiding them where you can may help to avoid flare-ups.

Most supermarkets do really good 'free from' ranges, so you can still have your cake and eat it if there are certain foods that you need to avoid!

Glady's from Southampton

Eat at set times every day and allow time for every meal. Feeling rushed or stressed can trigger flare-ups.

Cara from Nottingham

Keep a food diary to help you identify what triggers your symptoms.

Richard from Surrey

Find IBS friendly recipes on our website:

www.buscopan.co.uk

I find that fizzy drinks and alcohol can aggravate my symptoms so I limit these and drink plenty of water and peppermint tea.

James from Brighton

When keeping a diary, make sure you note down how you're feeling and what the circumstances are. If you're at home and feeling relaxed you may be able to eat your trigger foods in small portions. You don't always have to cut foods out completely.

Danielle from York

Cook from scratch when you can – if you know every ingredient that's in something then you can easily avoid what causes your flare-ups.

Sharon from Devon



BREAKING BAD HABITS

From the moment you're diagnosed, it's easy to pick up habits that exacerbate your symptoms. Realistically, it's not always possible to avoid your triggers or live a stress-free life, but trying to break bad habits you pick up along the way is a good place to start.

“ If your main triggers are your favourite foods, don't cut them out altogether but try avoiding them during social situations to make sure you don't have to end your night early. ”

Suzanne from Hampshire



“ Try to avoid eating late in the evening – your food needs time to digest before you go to sleep. ”

Cara from Liverpool

“ Don't avoid social situations altogether, it will only make you feel more stressed and anxious about your condition. Instead, make sure you're prepared by taking a treatment out with you and deciding what food to order beforehand. ”

Jamie from Birmingham

“ If you're still worried about the condition or it seems to be getting worse, don't ignore it. Go back to the doctor - that's what they're there for. ”

James from Bedford

DIFFICULT & EMBARRASSING SITUATIONS

Having IBS doesn't need to be embarrassing. There are a number of useful tips that you can take on board to help you deal with difficult situations.

DARREN FROM LIVERPOOL



“ Pretty much every form of public transport these days has a public toilet, so sit close by and don't be afraid to use it if you need to. ”

SOPHIE FROM KENT

“ When eating out, put your serviette across your tummy so no-one can see if your belly starts bloating. ”

JAMES FROM CAMBRIDGE

“ Keep a treatment with you when you're out and about so you feel prepared. ”

WHAT PEOPLE WISH THEY'D KNOWN WHEN THEY WERE FIRST DIAGNOSED

When you're first diagnosed you may go through a range of thoughts and emotions and it's often difficult to know what to think or where to turn. Sometimes calling upon the knowledge of people who've been through it too can be a great source of information or reassurance.

“ I wish I'd known that it's definitely possible to lead a normal life with IBS – experiment and try to find out what works for you and what doesn't. Write a food diary and become aware of your triggers – you'll be amazed at what comes up. ”

Carine from Uckfield

“ I waited too long before seeking any help so I suffered in silence for several years. I wish I'd spoken to my GP sooner. ”

Martin from Worthing

“ I wish I'd been stricter about following relaxation techniques such as yoga and looked after myself more carefully during stressful times through life. ”

Kelly from Warwickshire

“ Sometimes it's difficult to accept that you are stressed, whereas you can really help your mental and physical health by just accepting it and adjusting a few aspects of your life accordingly, instead of ploughing on regardless and making yourself ill. ”

John from Brighton

“ I should have been more honest and open about having IBS rather than bottling it up and letting it worry me. Now I've told my family and friends I'm far less conscious about it. ”

Alice from Somerset

“ When I was first diagnosed I didn't fully understand what having the condition meant and it was really overwhelming. Something I wish I'd learnt earlier is that IBS is a disorder of the bowel function – so there's no actual damage to your gut. It would've put my mind at rest to know that it isn't life-threatening. ”

Laura from Brighton

HOW TO FEEL COMFORTABLE DISCUSSING YOUR IBS

It's not always easy talking about bowel issues but whether you tell close friends, family members or are open with everyone, talking about your condition can often help.

Try not to be ashamed about discussing your symptoms - particularly with your doctor. They will have heard far worse than anything you can tell them and the more information you can give them the better they will be able to help you.

Julie from Portsmouth

Don't be embarrassed by it, just be honest. If you're open and don't mind discussing it, then other people won't see it as an issue either.

Simon from London

Explain how it makes you feel, rather than what it does to your body physically. If they know the psychological affects it has on you then they are more likely to want to listen and find out how they can help.

Leanne from Oxford

Just get right to the point. Maybe spare them all the gory details but don't be ashamed to admit it.

Rachel from Suffolk

There are loads of people that suffer with IBS and it really is so common. Be open and share your experiences - most people have probably gone through something similar at some point in their lives so it's unlikely to be shocking and talking about it can really help.

Kelly from Brighton



Don't panic and talk to somebody - even if it's a friend, a family member or your GP - just make sure that you explain things to them fully and give them the opportunity to understand. It's quite likely that if they haven't come into contact with it before they'll be just as confused as you were when you were first diagnosed.

Jenny from Norfolk

TOP TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS

Now you've heard from other people who have IBS, read on to hear more advice from our IBS expert panel...



"TRY NOT TO SKIP MEALS AS LEAVING LONG GAPS BETWEEN EATING OR EATING LATE AT NIGHT MAY BOTH AGGRAVATE IBS."

Helen Bond,
State Registered Dietitian



"IT IS A PART OF GOOD GENERAL HEALTH TO TAKE EXERCISE REGULARLY, AND THIS MAY HAVE A BENEFICIAL IMPACT ON IBS SYMPTOMS. EVEN GENTLE PURSUITS SUCH AS YOGA OR WALKING THE DOG CAN COUNT IN THIS REGARD, SO FACTORING EXERCISE IN TO DAILY LIFE COULD BE BENEFICIAL."

Dr Anton Emmanuel,
Gastroenterologist



"IDENTIFYING & MANAGING YOUR TRIGGERS WILL HELP REDUCE YOUR SYMPTOMS BUT IF YOU ARE STILL STRUGGLING WITH SPASMS, ANTISPASMODICS CAN BE TAKEN AT THE FIRST SIGN OF FLARE UPS TO EASE THE PAIN."

Dr Dawn Harper,
Media Medic

Helen Bond, Dr Anton Emmanuel and Dr Dawn Harper do not endorse any products

This 'Managing IBS Better Together' booklet has been brought to you by Buscopan IBS Relief, the UK's number 1 choice for IBS relief (available to buy from most pharmacies and supermarkets)*

**based on sales data*

Buscopan IBS Relief* works differently to regular painkillers as it targets the spasms, the root cause of abdominal pain in IBS, and its fast action quickly helps the digestive process return to normal. The active ingredient, hyoscine butylbromide, is derived from the Duboisia plant and acts locally in the bowel, just where it's needed. Buscopan IBS Relief is gentle on the stomach, and can be taken at the first signs of every flare-up.



*Buscopan IBS Relief contains hyoscine butylbromide. For medically Confirmed IBS. Always read the label



We would like to thank our volunteers for kindly sharing their tips and experiences with us and making this advice booklet possible.

For further information & advice on IBS visit
www.buscopan.co.uk

Brought to you by **Buscopan**[®]

For medically confirmed IBS. Contains hyoscine butylbromide. Always read the label.