Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a chronic intestinal disorder causing abdominal pain, cramping, gas, and bloating, in addition to bouts of diarrhea or constipation. IBS does not cause inflammation or permanent harm, nor does it progress to more serious conditions. It can, nevertheless, be very distressing. Past names for this disorder include colitis, mucous colitis, spastic colon, spastic bowel, and functional bowel disease.

The exact cause of IBS is not known. There may be several causes, and IBS may itself be a collection of different conditions, each having a different cause. IBS is placed in a class of diseases known as “functional disorders,” a term that means no structural, biochemical, or infectious cause has yet been found.

Possible triggers for IBS include:

- Ordinary events such as eating or bloating from gas-producing foods
- Certain foods: milk products, chocolate, alcohol, caffeine, carbonated drinks, and fatty foods or simply larger meals
- Stress
- Emotional conflict
- Menstrual periods

IBS afflicts 10%-20% of American adults, generating over 3 million yearly visits to physicians and comprising a quarter to a half of all visits to gastroenterologists. Over 60% of people with IBS are women.
What is it like to live with irritable bowel syndrome?
Where can I get more information about irritable bowel syndrome?

REFERENCES:


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