IBS can be treated.

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) is a group of symptoms that causes stomach pain, cramping and discomfort, along with diarrhea, constipation or both.

If you have at least two of these symptoms, you may have IBS.
- You have bowel movements more or less often than usual
- Your stool is looser or harder than usual
- Your discomfort feeling goes away after a bowel movement

Other IBS symptoms may include:
- Diarrhea (loose, watery stool)
- Constipation (hard, dry stool)
- Stomach bloating
- Passing mucus
- Feeling that a bowel movement is not finished

Certain foods and drinks may cause IBS symptoms:
- Foods high in fat
- Milk products
- Drinks with alcohol or caffeine or artificial sweeteners
- Foods that may cause gas, such as beans and cabbage

During your visit to the doctor’s office or clinic ask about:
- Changes in eating, diet and nutrition
- Medications
- Behavioral therapies

If you have IBS symptoms, here are some questions to discuss with your doctor’s office:
- How is IBS diagnosed?
- Are there tests that should be done? If so, what are they?
- What can trigger IBS?
- Should I change what I eat or drink? If so, how?
- What foods or drinks should I stay away from?
- Can I take medication? If so, what kind?

Make regular appointments with your doctor’s office, and keep them.

Supported by a grant from Forest Laboratories, Inc.

For more information, visit www.MedlinePlus.gov and search for “Irritable Bowel Syndrome”. (November 2013)

© 2013 ACP