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**Irritable Bowel Syndrome Fact Sheet**

Many patients (20% of American adults) suffer for years with Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS). Unfortunately, this may be because of poor treatment or that their medical practitioner tells them to just eat more fiber, take antidepressants or anti-spasm drugs or worse that the symptoms are “all in their head.” The best way to treat IBS is to address the underlying causes of why your digestion is malfunctioning and restore normal digestive health.

In my practice, I’ve found that there are two causes of IBS: An overgrowth of bad bacteria in the small intestine and food allergies.

**Intestinal Bacterial Overgrowth**

Your small intestine is the site of about 60 percent of your immune system. There is a delicate lining in the gut between this beneficial part of the gut and the part containing bacteria and undigested food particles.

It is theorized that this lining can be broken down by many assaults—a low-fiber, high-sugar diet (the white stuff), intestinal infections, stress, anti-inflammatory drugs (like steroids and NSAIDS) and antibiotics. These irritants can create havoc by triggering an immune response or allergy.

You have about 3 pounds (500 species) of bacteria in your gut. Think of your gut as an old western town. When the bad guys (bad bacteria) take over the town (your gut), it’s because there aren’t enough sheriffs and deputies (good bacteria) to defend the town. This means all havoc breaks loose and in your body it’s called small bowel bacterial overgrowth, a major cause of IBS.

**Food Sensitivities**

Another major cause of IBS is food sensitivities or intolerances. These are not true allergies like when someone eats shellfish and breaks out in hives or worse. The symptoms are vague (bloating, constipation, weight gain) and the exposure is frequent (breakfast, lunch and dinner), so the connection is murky. And, over years, the hidden sensitivities take a toll on the immune system.

A recently published paper in the prestigious British medical journal *GUT* found that eliminating foods identified through delayed food allergy testing (IgG antibodies) resulted in dramatic improvements in IBS symptoms.1

**What can I do if I have IBS?**

IBS is a complicated condition and although bacterial overgrowth and food sensitivities are the main culprits, there may be other complications like parasites, insufficient digestive enzymes, heavy metal toxicity, and zinc or magnesium deficiency.

Often IBS is also accompanied by bacterial or yeast infections. If your doctor diagnoses these conditions, they may prescribe a non-absorbed antibiotic and/or antifungal drug.

There are researched therapies for treating IBS in a functional way (healing the body). Diet and supplementation are proven to be effective and safe. Contact me today at lindy@lindyfordwellness.com or 443.417.8352 for more information about how you can take positive action to control and perhaps arrest IBS.

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