

Understanding Your IBS Diagnosis

Essential First Steps & Practical Strategies for Daily Management

PRACTICAL STARTING TIPS

1. Track Your Symptoms & Food

Before making drastic changes, keep a detailed journal for 2–3 weeks. Note down what you eat, your stress levels, sleep quality, and when symptoms occur. Patterns will emerge.

2. Modify Fiber Intake Gradually

Fiber is key but tricky. Soluble fiber (like oats, flaxseed, and psyllium) helps soothe both diarrhea and constipation. Introduce it slowly to prevent initial bloating.

3. Adjust Eating Habits

Eat regular meals and take your time. Skipping meals or eating large portions quickly can overstimulate your gut's natural contractions and trigger sudden cramping.

4. Explore the Low-FODMAP Diet

FODMAPs are specific short-chain carbohydrates that can ferment in the gut. Under the guidance of a dietitian, a temporary elimination and reintroduction phase can pinpoint your exact triggers.

5. Prioritize Gut-Brain Connection

Your gut and brain communicate constantly. Stress, anxiety, and poor sleep can physically manifest as flare-ups. Incorporate regular movement, deep breathing, or yoga into your daily routine.

COMMON TRIGGERS

- **High-FODMAP Foods:** Garlic, onions, wheat, beans, milk, apples, and honey.
- **Gut Stimulants:** Caffeine, alcohol, heavy carbonation, and high-fat foods.
- **Artificial Sweeteners:** Sorbitol, mannitol, and xylitol (often found in sugar-free gum).

SMART SUBSTITUTES

- Instead of wheat pasta → **Rice or quinoa pasta**
- Instead of garlic/onion → **Chive-infused oils**
- Instead of cow's milk → **Lactose-free alternative**
- Instead of apples/pears → **Strawberries or oranges**

Remember: IBS is highly individualized. What triggers someone else might be perfectly safe for you. Be patient with your body.

This guide is for informational purposes only. Always work closely with a healthcare professional or registered dietitian to tailor an IBS management plan that fits your health profile.