

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (Ibs)

What Is Irritable Bowel Syndrome?

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) is a common gastrointestinal disorder that affects the functioning of the digestive system. It is characterised by a group of symptoms, including abdominal pain or discomfort, bloating, and changes in bowel habits such as diarrhoea, constipation, or both. IBS is considered a functional disorder, meaning there are no structural abnormalities or underlying disease processes causing the symptoms. Instead, it is thought to be related to abnormalities in the way the gut functions.

How Is It Diagnosed?

The diagnosis of IBS is essential when individuals experience persistent and bothersome gastrointestinal symptoms. Identifying IBS helps healthcare providers rule out other more serious conditions and provides a framework for symptom management and treatment. Accurate diagnosis allows for the development of a personalised management plan tailored to the individual's symptoms and needs.

What Does The Process Involve?

1. **Clinical Evaluation:** A healthcare provider will conduct a thorough clinical assessment, including a detailed medical history and physical examination. This helps to identify symptoms and potential risk factors associated with IBS.
2. **Diagnostic Criteria:** To diagnose IBS, healthcare providers often use standardised criteria, such as the Rome criteria or the Manning criteria. These criteria consider the type, frequency, and duration of symptoms.
3. **Exclusion of Other Conditions:** IBS is a diagnosis of exclusion, which means that other gastrointestinal conditions must be ruled out through appropriate tests. These tests may include blood tests, stool tests, and imaging studies.

How To Prepare?

There is typically no specific preparation required for the clinical evaluation and diagnosis of IBS. However, it can be helpful for individuals to keep a symptom diary to track their symptoms, including when they occur and any associated factors such as dietary choices or stress levels. This information can aid in the diagnosis and development of a management plan.

How Long Does It Take?

The time it takes to diagnose IBS can vary depending on the complexity of the case and the availability of diagnostic tests. Clinical evaluation and symptom assessment can typically be completed in one or more visits. The exclusion of other gastrointestinal conditions may involve additional tests and may extend the diagnostic process.

What Happens After?

After an IBS diagnosis, the healthcare provider will discuss treatment options and develop a personalised management plan. Treatment for IBS often involves dietary modifications, lifestyle changes, and medications

to manage specific symptoms. Patients will also receive guidance on managing stress and improving overall gut health. Regular follow-up appointments are essential to assess treatment effectiveness and make adjustments as needed. It's important to note that IBS is a chronic condition, and ongoing medical care and symptom management are key to improving the patient's quality of life.