

## APRIL Health Topic

# Irritable Bowel Syndrome



IBS is a functional bowel disorder that typically presents as altered stool consistency combined with abdominal bloating, pain or discomfort that is usually relieved with defecation.

In general functional bowel disorder refers to a group of disorders which are characterized by chronic abdominal complaints without a structural or biochemical cause that could explain symptoms. These disorders affect gastrointestinal (GI) tract function and movement at any part of the tract. Other known functional bowel disorders are dyspepsia, non-cardiac chest pain, chronic abdominal pain and constipation. Certain infectious diseases, celiac disease, parasites, food allergies and lactose intolerance are often misdiagnosed as IBS. Many times a functional bowel disorder is considered a "diagnosis of exclusion" whereas other GI diseases such as Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) or Peptic Ulcer Disease (PUD) are ruled out via diagnostic testing using endoscopy or colonoscopy with biopsy.

### Resources at Northwestern for IBS

The Northwestern Center for Functional Gastrointestinal and Motility Disorders provides comprehensive evaluation and treatment for patients with difficult and often poorly explained digestive symptoms. This center provides a variety of integrated healthcare resources to patients suffering from digestive & motility disorders like IBS.

<http://www.northwesternmotility.com/staff.html>

Dr. Stephen Stryker's Digestique clinic strives to provide a resource for women seeking relief from chronic digestive illnesses by emphasizing a team approach to diagnosis and treatment. The clinic offers both traditional and alternative medicine concepts in a comfortable, state of the art facility to provide expeditious diagnosis and compassionate treatment for these disabling conditions.

<http://www.digestique.com/>

### Northwestern Physicians / Researchers Specializing in IBS Treatment

The Division of Gastroenterology within the Department of Medicine has active areas of basic science and clinical research. Dr. Terrence Barrett pursues studies of intestinal immunology with a slant toward IBD. On the clinical side, Drs. Kahrilas, Pandolfino, Jones, and Hirano pursue studies of intestinal physiology with a slant toward motor disorders and reflux disease.

Physician profiles and clinic information:

<http://www.nmff.org/findphysician/default.asp>

<http://www.nmff.org/clinicaldepts/departments.asp?id=8>

### IWHR Highlighted Researcher

Dr. Laurie Keefer, PhD is a Health Psychologist and an Assistant Professor of Medicine and Psychiatry in the Feinberg School of Medicine. She has co-authored a paper on the gender differences in IBS and has other schol-

arly output pertaining to the psychopathology of intestinal disorders. Dr. Keefer is on staff at the Northwestern Center for Functional Gastrointestinal and Motility Disorders and her clinical practice focuses on providing behavioral treatment for IBS, dyspepsia and IBD. Some of the techniques she uses are gut-directed hypnotherapy, behavior therapy, cognitive therapy, relaxation meditation training and stress management.

### Useful Links and Resources

<http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/ibs/>

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tutorials/irritablebowelsyndrome/html/index.htm>

<http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/a-z.asp>

<http://www.ibsgroup.org/>

### Upcoming conferences/symposiums:

2008 Clinical Research Education Conference at Northwestern, May 16, 2008.

<http://www.nucats.northwestern.edu/education/CRPT/CREC/2008CREC/Doerfler.html>

Federal, state, and local organizations identify a number of health issues each month to bring to national attention. The Institute will focus on one of these topics each month.

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