

Does My Child Have IBS?

Symptoms of IBS in Kids Explained

IBS is fairly common in children and tends to show up more often in girls than boys



Studies suggest that about

6% to 14%

of kids may have IBS, although exact numbers are not available

IBS is not life-threatening, but it may affect school attendance, daily routines, emotional wellbeing and overall quality of life



What is IBS in Children?

- Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a functional gastrointestinal (GI) disorder
- Children may experience recurring digestive symptoms such as:

Recurrent cramps • Bloating and gas • Constipation • Diarrhea • Nausea • Decreased appetite • Feeling incomplete after a bowel movement • Mucus in stool

Possible causes:



Changes in the gut microbiota



May be linked to gut motility, sensitivity, mucosal and immune function



Communication between the gut and the brain

Seek medical help if your child experiences symptoms beyond their normal, such as blood in their stools, recurring fever, worsening cramps, unintentional weight loss, or slowed growth

What Triggers IBS in Children?

FODMAP foods: Can be harder for some children to digest



High-fat foods: Could lead to bloating, cramps, constipation, or diarrhea



Large meals: Could put additional strain on the digestive system



Stress: May intensify the symptoms

Gut sensitivity: Colon may react strongly to normal intestinal stretching or movement



How is IBS Diagnosed in Children?

- Primary care provider will take your child's health history into consideration
- Blood tests, stool tests, abdominal ultrasounds, or colonoscopy
- Rome IV criteria
- Bristol Stool Form Scale

IBS-C

with constipation

IBS-M

mixed type

IBS-D

with diarrhea

Can Kids Outgrow IBS?

Symptoms may improve for some children as they age, especially with effective management strategies in place, allowing them to live normal and active lives

What Parents Can Do?



Reassure your child



Support with tracking symptoms and triggers



Offer nutritious meals



Offer meals at regular times



Consider offering probiotics

*discuss with a healthcare provider



Ensure adequate hydration



Encourage active lifestyle



Find ways to manage stress