

HOW CAN I MANAGE IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME?

Dear Dr Grace,
I have had stomach problems for a long time and I was recently diagnosed with irritable bowel syndrome. Please explain what it means and how I can feed better with this condition.
Ezekiel

Dear Ezekiel,
Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a bowel condition characterised by abdominal pain, discomfort, bloating, diarrhoea and altered bowel movements. It is a functional disorder, in which the structure of the colon is not affected. The causative factors are not entirely clear, although it is believed to have a very strong psychological component. Anxious, irritable and depressed individuals are more prone to this condition.

Current medications available to

IBS patients in Uganda include painkillers, laxatives and anti-diarrhoea agents.

Unfortunately, these medicines only treat the symptoms and do not address the underlying cause and for many patients, medications provide little or no relief at all. This is probably because the real problem does not lie in the digestive tract, but in the brain,



Green leafy vegetables aid irritable bowel syndrome fight

where processing of sensations from the gut takes place. Easing stress and nervousness which result in digestive disturbances becomes very important in managing this condition. Subsequently, supporting the colon for optimal functioning can ease the situation and this can

be done through having high fibre foods, such as unprocessed maize meal, millet and dark green leafy vegetables, such as *Sukuma wiki*, *malakwang*, gynandropsis gynandra (*Ejjobyo*) and *nakati*. Drinking warm water with a dash of lemon in the morning, following this with freshly processed fruit and vegetable juices with their

fibre in between meals throughout the day keep the health of the colon in tip top condition.

Replacing some meals, especially the last meal of the day with vegetable soup made of onions, tomatoes, spices such as ginger, varieties of peppers (red, black, white), can condition the colon into good health, thus positively affecting the whole digestive system.

While adequate sleep is important after all responsibilities in the day, regular exercises to improve positivity of the brain accompanied with taking in Omega 3 for its health, can turn around the bowel syndrome situation, which is strongly anchored to brain performance.

Dr. Grace Hambatya Kyeyune is a doctor in medicinal chemistry. If you have any inquiries about nutrition for her, send an email to: sundayxtra@newvision.co.ug

RICE SAMOSA WITH A VARIETY OF FILLINGS