



Stress and irritable bowel syndrome

HEALTHY MINDS

Got something on your mind?

Stress and Irritable Bowel Syndrome

Irritable Bowel Syndrome, or IBS, is a condition which affects around 20 per cent of the population. IBS tends to affect more women than men. It can cause people to feel pain and discomfort in their stomach or intestines and can cause diarrhoea as well as constipation and wind. The condition can improve over time or may stay with someone for life.

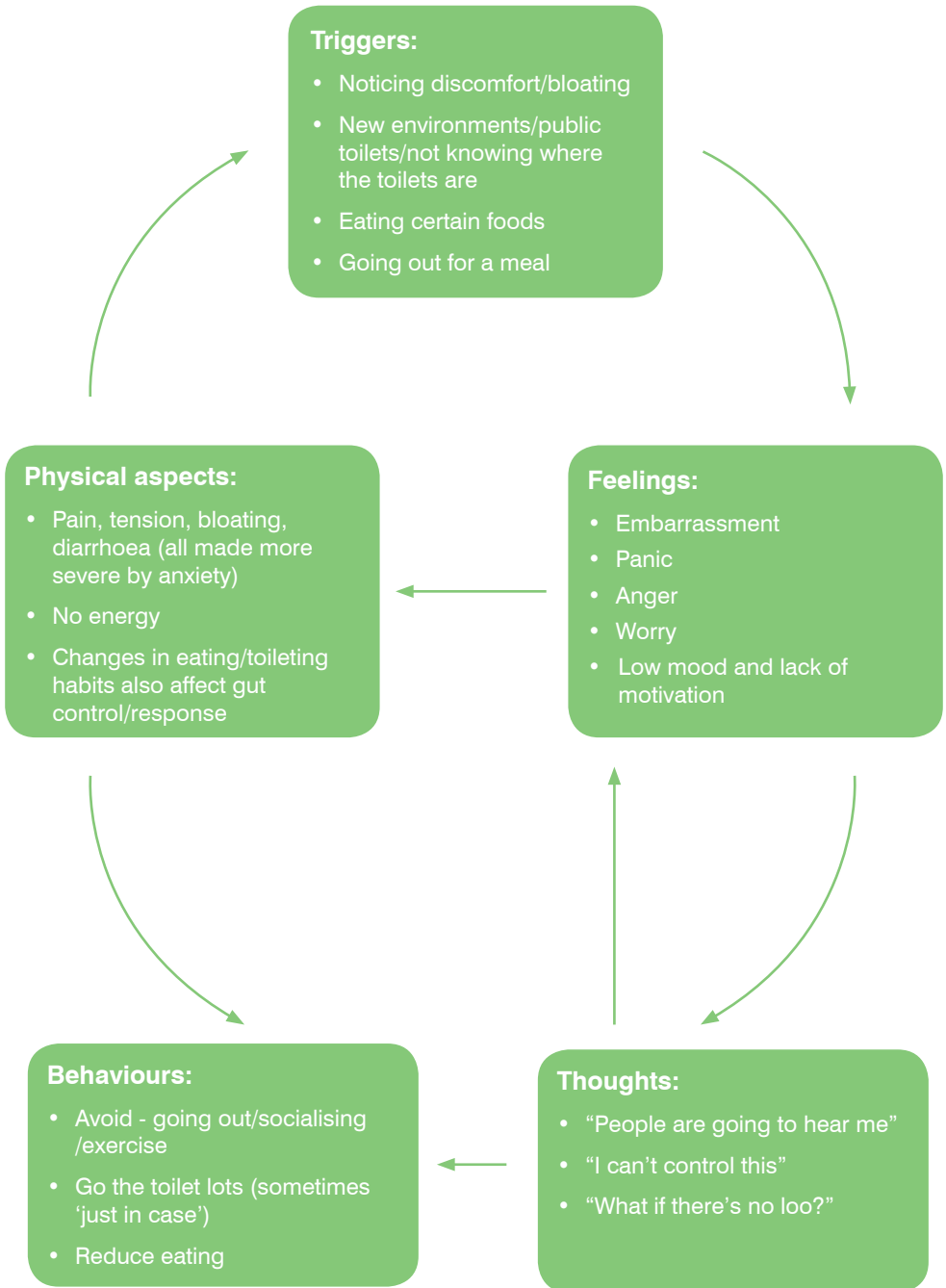
The exact cause of IBS is unknown and it is often diagnosed after tests have ruled out other conditions. As the cause is not known, sufferers may feel that they are not getting any answers, which can be really frustrating. IBS cannot be cured, but the symptoms can be managed by identifying and cutting trigger foods out of the diet and also by managing stress.

IBS and it's impact on your mood: the vicious cycle

Often stress and IBS are related. No one knows what comes first but the gut is often called the 'little brain' and it shares many nerve pathways and chemical transmitters. It is quite common for people to suffer from diarrhoea when they are nervous about something, even when they don't have IBS. This is because anxiety affects the progress of food through the stomach and digestive system.

When you have IBS, the symptoms may be unpredictable. For this reason people with IBS can feel nervous or anxious about being out in new places, particularly if they don't know where the toilets are, or where there are public loos. When people begin to feel anxious, worries and unhelpful thoughts can take over. For some people, this can lead to avoiding certain situations. Avoiding situations in the long-term just causes anxiety to get worse, which can make symptoms worse. Sufferers get caught in the vicious cycle on the opposite page.

IBS vicious cycle



How Healthy Minds can help

Healthy Minds IAPT (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) service provides a range of psychological therapies and emotional support.

Healthy Minds can provide support and practical ways of managing stress in your life, to help to prevent stress related flare ups of IBS.

Our team can help you to recognise your own cycle of IBS, so that you can begin to feel in control of your response to IBS. They may offer you a space to off load any concerns that you have, or give you strategies to help you to reduce stress, manage pain and other symptoms of IBS. They could also help you to replace the unhelpful thoughts and worries, with more helpful thoughts.

Healthy Minds can help you to take small steps to challenge the limits that IBS places on your life, so that you can continue to do the activities that you enjoy.

Contacting Healthy Minds

You can pass on your details to Healthy Minds by using the website below. You will be contacted in due course. However if you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact us on:

Tel: 0161 419 5725

www.penninecare.nhs.uk/healthyminds

If you prefer, you can ask your GP or other healthcare professional to refer you to Healthy Minds.



Patient Advice and Liaison Service

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) acts on behalf of service users, families and carers to negotiate prompt solutions and help bring about changes in the way that services are developed. As well as providing a confidential advice and support service, PALS will help guide you through the different services available from the NHS.

Tel: 0161 716 3178

Comments and complaints

We want to learn from comments and complaints about our services. If you have any, please speak with a member of staff. Every effort will be made to resolve any concerns and complaining will not cause any difficulties in your care with us.

You can also contact the Trust's Complaints Department via post at Trust Headquarters, 225 Old Street, Ashton-under-Lyne, OL6 7SR.

Tel: 0161 716 3083

Email: complaints.penninecare@nhs.net

Become a member of our Trust

You can be the voice of your community by electing or becoming a governor, find out more about your local mental health and community services, and receive updates, comment on our plans and get invitations to health events.

Tel: 0161 716 3960

Email: ftmembership.penninecare@nhs.net

Alternative formats

If you need help to understand this information, require it in another format such as large print, spoken (on CD) or Braille, or require it in a different language – speak to a member of staff.

Patient Quote

“IBS affected all aspects of my life. I was always anxious if I didn’t know where the nearest loo was, and would often be late because I’d had to stop off on the way to meetings to use the toilet. The pain in my stomach was unbearable at times. The support I received helped me to manage my anxiety about the condition and to manage the pain effectively. I was able to return to a normal daily routine”