



HEALTH AWARENESS

IBS Myths Interfere With Treatment

(NAPSA)—Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a common disorder, affecting between 10 percent and 15 percent of the population or more. Despite the vast number of people affected by IBS, much about the disorder remains unknown. Perhaps this is why myths and misinformation about IBS are so common.

“Myths often discourage those affected by IBS from seeking effective treatments that may improve their quality of life,” reports Nancy Norton, president and founder of the International Foundation for Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders (IFFGD). “It is important that sufferers correctly understand the condition so they can work to minimize the effects of factors that might contribute to symptoms.”

Here are three common IBS myths:

Myth #1: It's just stress.

Life is full of stressors. These stressors—whether physical, emotional, dietary or hormonal—cause gut reactions in most people. Stress will not cause a person to develop IBS, but because the gut is more sensitive in people with IBS, stress of any kind is more likely to trigger symptoms. Reducing the effects of stress is just one factor to consider when treating IBS.

Myth #2: It must be something I ate.

Many sufferers believe that IBS symptoms will disappear when they find a “safe” diet. For some, one or more foods clearly trigger symptoms, and for them it makes sense to adjust their diets. However, it is important to keep in mind that in some cases simply

What is IBS?

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is an intestinal disorder that causes abdominal pain or discomfort, diarrhea and/or constipation. Bloating and gassiness are also common.

Almost everyone suffers from intestinal symptoms from time to time. However, IBS symptoms return again and again, often without warning.



eating a meal will trigger symptoms and that few IBS sufferers can control symptoms through dietary changes alone.

Myth #3: There must be a cure out there.

There are many treatments shown to improve symptoms of IBS; unfortunately, none of them is a cure. Stories of miraculous cures are appealing and abundant, but none of these treatments has held up to medical scrutiny. Be skeptical of any claim that seems too good to be true.

While there is not yet a cure, symptoms of IBS may still be manageable. Controlling IBS starts with a proper diagnosis, educating yourself about the disorder and working with a doctor to find treatment approaches that are best for you. Treatments range from lifestyle changes to medications, hypnosis, relaxation exercises and others. Medical researchers are investigating other treatment approaches that hold hope for more options in the future.

For more information about IBS, visit www.aboutibs.org.



Note To Editors: April is IBS Awareness Month, information for readers is available from IFFGD.