

# In Good Health

## Irritable Bowel Syndrome



**Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) is a functional disorder in which the bowel doesn't work or function correctly. Symptoms associated with IBS can include constipation, diarrhoea (sometimes a combination of both), and abdominal pain.**

The exact cause of IBS is unknown however some factors such as stress, diet, and changes in routine may trigger symptoms. Women with IBS often experience more symptoms during their menstrual periods. Although the symptoms of IBS can be painful and disruptive, the syndrome doesn't cause any lasting damage and doesn't lead to other serious bowel conditions.

If you suspect you have IBS it is very important to seek medical advice as symptoms are often similar to other diseases such as inflammatory bowel disease and coeliac disease. Your doctor can carry out blood tests, stool tests and other medical check-ups to make a diagnosis.

Although there is no cure for IBS there are a number of measures that can be taken to prevent the onset of symptoms, and to ease symptoms if they occur. These may include:

- Stress management
- Establishing a regular eating routine and sticking to it
- Gradually adding small amounts of fibre to your diet to alleviate constipation
- Eating small regular meals
- Avoiding foods that are high in fat as these often trigger symptoms
- Taking medicines prescribed by your doctor such as anti-spasmodics, laxatives, and anti-depressants
- Keeping a food diary to determine if certain foods trigger symptoms, and if so, consulting your doctor who may advise you to eat less of these foods, or cut them out altogether.



People with IBS can become frustrated and feel that their symptoms are not being taken seriously. It is important to seek help and talk to someone with experience in the successful treatment of the syndrome.

# Five Food Myths

## BUSTED

**1. Myth** - Frozen vegetables are less nutritious than fresh vegetables

**Fact** - Frozen vegetables are just as nutritious, and sometimes more nutritious than fresh vegetables. This is because they are usually frozen within hours of being harvested meaning they retain their high vitamin and mineral content. Fresh vegetables on the other hand, may lose many nutrients during transportation and storage.

**2. Myth** - Margarine contains less fat than butter

**Fact** - Both margarine and butter contain similar amounts of fat. The difference between the two has to do with the types of fat they contain. Butter contains higher levels of saturated fat which can raise blood cholesterol, whereas margarines are often higher in polyunsaturated fats and mono-unsaturated fats, and lower in saturated fats, making them a healthier choice.

**3. Myth** - 'Low-fat' foods are always low in calories

**Fact** - Just because a food is labeled as being 'low-fat' or 'reduced-fat', doesn't mean it is low in calories or a healthy choice. Such foods can contain the same amount, or even more calories than standard versions. This is because the fat is often replaced with other ingredients such as extra sugar and flour which can be high in calories and lead to weight gain.

**4. Myth** - Eating carbohydrates causes weight gain

**Fact** - Carbohydrates do not cause weight gain unless they are a factor in excess calorie consumption. Furthermore, it sometimes seems that carbohydrates cause weight gain because they are often served with sauces and toppings that are high in calories and fat.

**5. Myth** - Eating late at night promotes weight gain

**Fact** - It does not matter what time you eat, it is what you eat, how much you eat, and how much exercise you do throughout the day that determines whether you lose, gain or maintain your body weight.

# Dangers of Detox

A number of detox diets that claim to shed weight and cleanse the body of toxins, have become very popular in recent years. These diets usually involve fasting of some sort and can mean drinking only water, raw fruit juices or supplement shakes for days, or even weeks at a time.

While some people continue to argue the benefits of detox diets, it is important to be aware of the many dangers that can be involved with reducing calorie-intake to the extreme. Furthermore it is important to remember that detox diets are not an effective long-term solution to weight loss.

Some of the immediate symptoms of detox diets include headaches, dizziness and nausea. While these are only minor symptoms they may lead to falls or accidents due to a lack of concentration when carrying out every day tasks such as climbing the stairs, or driving a car.

When detox diets are taken to extremes and for long periods of time, they can be associated with some other more serious effects such as:

- Dehydration
- Vitamin and mineral deficiency and malnutrition
- Muscle break-down
- Depression
- Anemia
- Diminished immune system
- Cardiac Arrhythmia
- Brain damage

It is important to see your doctor before embarking on any new diet.



# Tennis Elbow

'Tennis elbow' or lateral epicondylitis is a common overuse injury that leads to soreness or pain on the outside of the elbow.

Although typically associated with tennis playing, the injury can occur as a result of any activity that involves repetitive motions of the wrist or forearm. Anyone can be affected but the two main groups are sports participants and manual labourers.

The pain associated with 'tennis elbow' usually has a gradual onset but can also occur quite suddenly. The most common symptoms are pain on the outside of the elbow that worsens when grasping objects and cocking the wrist back, and pain radiating down the forearm.

## Treatment

If you feel any of these symptoms it is advisable to stop what you are doing and rest your arm for a few days. If symptoms persist however, you should see your doctor or physiotherapist who may recommend some of the following treatments:

- Anti-inflammatory medications such as ibuprofen
- Cortisone injections
- Use of an elbow brace
- Flexibility and strengthening exercises
- In severe cases, surgery may be necessary

## Prevention

There are a number of measures that can be taken to reduce the risk of injury occurring:

- Use correct techniques and suitable equipment when playing sports
- Warm-up and cool-down thoroughly before and after playing sports
- Do regular flexibility and strengthening exercises as recommended by your doctor or physiotherapist
- If possible, avoid or adjust any tasks that involves repetitive motions of the wrist and forearm

## INTERVAL *Training*



Interval training is physical exercise that consists of bursts of high intensity activity alternated with periods of rest or low intensity activity. It can be undertaken using any type of cardiovascular exercise such as walking, running, cycling or swimming. It has become an extremely popular form of training with both professional athletes and recreational exercisers who want to improve aerobic capacity and endurance.

Interval training makes use of the body's two energy production systems: the aerobic and the anaerobic. Your aerobic system draws energy from oxygen, which converts carbohydrates into energy. This is the type of energy that allows you to walk, cycle or run for long periods of time.

Your anaerobic system draws energy from the carbohydrate stores in your muscles, meaning you can engage in short and quick bursts of activity such as sprinting and jumping, without the use of oxygen.

During the bursts of high intensity activity during interval training, your muscles produce lactic acid which can build up and cause your muscles to ache and burn. By including a rest or recovery period in between these bursts, you can reduce lactic acid build up meaning you can train for longer.

Other benefits of interval training:

- Improve cardiovascular fitness
- Increase speed
- Improve overall aerobic power
- Burn more calories
- Help avoid injury that often accompanies non-stop, repetitive activities
- Increase workout duration and intensity

## Tips for Interval Training

- Warm up thoroughly before interval training
- Start slowly e.g. 2 minutes of walking, followed by 2 minutes of running, and repeat.
- Keep a steady but challenging pace throughout the interval
- Increase the number of repetitions gradually over time
- Increase the intensity of the interval gradually over time
- Increase the duration of the interval gradually over time
- Bring your heart rate down to 100-110 bpm during the rest interval
- Set training goals that are within your ability
- Cool down thoroughly after interval training

It is recommended that you consult an athletic trainer, coach or personal trainer before embarking on an interval training program.

# Maintaining a Healthy Body Weight

Maintaining a healthy body weight means balancing the energy that goes into your body (as food and drink) with the energy used by your body for growth and repair, physical activity and to keep your body functioning correctly. The total amount of food you need will depend on your age, sex, body size, level of physical activity and whether you are pregnant or breastfeeding. There is no ideal weight that suits everybody.

There are two different measurements you can take to determine whether you are a healthy weight: by calculating your Body Mass Index (BMI), and by measuring your waist circumference. It is best to do these calculations in conjunction with one another to provide a thorough assessment of your weight range.

Body Mass Index (BMI) compares your weight to your height and is calculated by dividing your weight in kilograms by your height in metres squared. The table below shows the classification of BMI as determined by the World Health Organization (WHO).

It is important to note however, that BMI does have some limitations as it can be influenced by factors such as age, gender and ethnicity. Furthermore, it does not distinguish fat mass, from lean mass and so may not be accurate for people who have greater muscle mass, such as athletes.

In conjunction with the BMI, your waist measurement can help provide an assessment of your weight range. Waist circumference is a measurement of weight stored around

the abdomen. Having fat around the abdominal area can be a risk factor for chronic diseases such as cancer, type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

To check your waist circumference use a tape measure and place it halfway between your lowest rib and the top of your hipbone, roughly in line with your belly button. Ensure to breathe normally while doing so, and make sure the tape fits snugly against your skin. A healthy waist circumference, as determined by the World Health Organization, is less than 80cm for women, and less than 94cm for men.

If you are concerned, or unsure about your BMI, waist measurement, or weight-related health risk, you should visit your doctor who can give you further advice.

## Tips for maintaining a healthy body weight:

- Eat a balanced diet that includes plenty of fruit, vegetables, legumes and cereals. Also include low-fat dairy products, lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs and nuts.
- Drink plenty of water
- Eat less salt, try to avoid adding salt to your food
- Cut down on fats and sugar in your diet
- Control the size of your food portions and eat slowly
- Undertake at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on most, if not all days.

Classification	BMI	Health Risk
Underweight	Less than 18.5	Low (but possible increased risk of other clinical problems)
Healthy Weight Range	18.5 - 24.9	Average
Overweight	25.0 - 29.9	Increased
Obese I	30.0 - 34.9	Moderate
Obese II	35.0 - 39.9	Severe
Obese III	40 or more	Very Severe



Echelon Australia Pty Limited  
ABN 96 085 720 056  
T 1300 66 97 44  
F 1300 66 97 55  
www.echelonhealth.com.au

## IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

- Vision
- Smoking
- Coeliac Disease
- 10 Reasons to Get Moving
- Antioxidants
- Eat to Beat Heart Disease