

Dr Irritable Bowel Syndrome

Consider IBS in those with more than 6 months of:

- Abdominal pain (may be relieved by defecation)
- Bloating
- Change in bowel habit (alteration in stool form or frequency)

*In the majority of cases IBS **can** be confidently diagnosed and treated in primary care*

Indications for referral

1. Red flag symptoms – if meets the criteria refer via 2WW Suspected Colorectal Cancer <https://doclibrary-rcht.cornwall.nhs.uk/RoyalCornwallHospitalsTrust/Internet/DocumentsLibrary/AZ/Services/CancerServices/ReferralForms.aspx>

Symptoms	Patient age				
	Over 40	Under 50	50 to 60	60 to 80	Over 80
Change in bowels for >3 weeks				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unexplained Rectal bleeding			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unexplained Iron deficiency anaemia			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rectal or abdominal mass			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Positive faecal occult blood (FOB) test				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rectal bleeding and anaemia		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Rectal bleeding and change in bowels		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Rectal bleeding and abdominal pain		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Rectal bleeding and weight loss		<input type="checkbox"/>			
Unexplained anal mass or anal ulceration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unexplained weight loss and abdominal pain	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Low risk but not no risk criteria					
Abdominal pain and Positive qFIT test			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
weight loss and Positive qFIT test			<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
change in bowel habit and Positive qFIT test			<input type="checkbox"/>		
iron deficiency anaemia and Positive qFIT test			<input type="checkbox"/>		
anaemia and Positive qFIT test				<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Note on qFIT

Consider in people who **DO NOT HAVE RECTAL BLEEDING** but are:

- Over 50 with unexplained abdominal pain or weight loss
- 50 to 60 with changes in bowel habit or iron-deficiency anaemia
- 60 or over with anaemia without iron deficiency

http://rms.kernowccg.nhs.uk/primary_care_clinical_referral_criteria/rms/primary_care_clinical_referral_criteria/gastro/qfit_testing_for_occult_blood_in_stool

GPs can still diagnose IBS in adults under 60 without using this test (as per NICE CG61)

2. Symptoms not responding to primary care treatment

Primary care management/Investigations prior to referral

- Reassurance and explanation
- Dietary advice
 - i. First line – sign post to NHS UK website - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/irritable-bowel-syndrome-ibs/further-help-and-support/?a=1>
 - ii. If no improvement, direct to FODMAPS webinar - <http://www.patientwebinars.co.uk>

Who to refer to a dietician:

- Those who have found an identified FODMAP causing symptoms or have further concerns, advise patient self refers to the Dietitian by emailing rcht.dietletters@nhs.net and asking for a referral form
- If the patient finds no improvement after **completing the above advice for a minimum of 8 weeks at each stage 1 and 2** (self referral as above, IBS patients only)
- If the GP feels the above is not suitable for the patient then they can refer the patient in the usual way on ERS
- Pain – buscopan / colpermin / amitriptyline / SSRI
- Diarrhoea – loperamide
- Constipation – fybogel / movicol
- Bloating – probiotics
- Psychological therapies if psychological symptoms predominate

Tests prior to referral

FBC, CRP, U&E, calcium, TSH, coeliac screen and IgA

Ca125 in women presenting with IBS symptoms especially if age 50 or over

Consider qFIT as mentioned above

Referrals will be rejected if primary care management is incomplete

Reference/Further Reading

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg61>

<https://www.theibsnetwork.org/>

<http://patient.info/doctor/irritable-bowel-syndrome-pro>

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