Mental Training to Beat IBS

by NEWLIFEOUTLOOK TEAM

Psychological Interventions for Irritable Bowel Syndrome

IBS can be difficult to treat as there is no single root cause or symptom. For some, diet changes will bring the greatest benefit, while others rely on medication to keep their symptoms in check. However, disease control can be mental as well as physical, and many people with IBS respond well to psychological approaches to treatment. Let's take a look at psychological interventions for IBS.

Psychological interventions range from guided therapies to independent exercises, and most are minimally invasive with few negative side effects. If you have trouble controlling IBS symptoms with traditional methods, consider which psychological therapies would best suit your symptoms and lifestyle.

Types of Psychological Interventions for IBS

Since pharmaceuticals have proven relatively ineffective in the treatment of IBS, more and more people are turning to a variety of psychotherapies to battle the symptoms and improve their quality of life. Some of the most common psychological interventions for IBS focus on attitude adjustments, but they use different approaches to incite the changes:

Hypnotherapy: Working with a therapist, patients access their unconscious minds to change thought patterns, responses and behaviors. There are also self-hypnosis techniques, which you can combine with guided therapy to help diminish the pain and discomfort of IBS whenever you need relief.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT): Experts believe that the mind plays a powerful role in the way people experience symptoms of an illness. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) teaches you to react differently to your symptoms with exercises in positive thinking, progressive muscle relaxation and biofeedback.

Psychodynamic Interpersonal Therapy (PIT): This form of talk therapy explores the roots of your beliefs and attitudes that may have negative effects on your health. The aim is to uncover and change elements in the unconscious mind to improve your mental control and physical comfort.

Mindfulness: Originally a central principle in Buddhism, mindfulness has become an effective mechanism for all sorts of people. Learning to live in the present moment can have cascading effects in all areas of life, including chronic illness, so this is a technique to use constantly and permanently.

Results and Effectiveness of Psychological Therapy

Different personalities will respond differently to therapy, but it’s clear that psychological interventions are more holistic, and therefore more helpful than other approaches. IBS symptoms might be primarily physical, but the embarrassment, worry and stress that results can lead many sufferers into social isolation, anxiety disorders or depression. Psychological interventions have a two-pronged effect: they aim to change reactions to and

experiences of physical symptoms while improving mood and relieving stress.

CBT is particularly helpful for treating IBS from the gastrointestinal discomfort to the underlying anxiety that will exacerbate the pain. Studies have shown that cognitive behavioral therapy has been far more effective than either education about the illness or medication – up to 70% of people will see positive results.

One reason for CBT's success may be the variety of exercises it employs, which allows each patient to personalize and refine their treatment plan according to their specific needs. However, traditional talk therapy and hypnotherapy have shown promise as well with up to 50% of patients reporting improved bowel symptoms. Although research continues into IBS treatment, these positive results lead experts to promote various psychological interventions for both mental and physical health, and ultimately, a more rewarding life.