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Sheet handed out in consultation

DIGESTIVE

Irritable bowel

Understanding your gut and calming it day to day

An irritable gut is not a diseased gut: it is a sensitive one. This sheet gathers the simple gestures that soothe it, the traps that set it off, and the right way to eat when everything seems to trigger a flare-up.

IN A NUTSHELL

Irritable bowel syndrome affects roughly one person in ten: pain, bloating, an erratic bowel habit, without any lesion. It is not a serious illness, nor is it 'all in the head': it is a disrupted conversation between your brain, your gut and your plate. The good news: eating habits are among the most effective levers, provided you play on regularity and gentleness rather than on bans.

THE ESSENTIALS

- Eat at regular times, sitting down, taking your time: it is the most effective and cheapest measure.
- Prefer hot and cooked food: your gut digests best what asks for the least effort.
- No food is banned for life: what counts is the dose, the frequency and your tolerance at the time.

WHAT HELPS YOU

Calm, regular meals : three proper meals at fixed times, without constant snacking: the gut loves routine.

Hot, cooked dishes : soups, stews, compotes, porridges: cooking does part of the digestive work for you.

Peppermint or fennel infusions : after tense meals: the two great carminative plants, useful against spasms and bloating.

Gentle fibres : oats, psyllium, chia seeds, kiwi: they regulate transit in both directions, introduced gradually.

Rice and porridges : congee, well-cooked rice, semolina: the reassuring base for days when the gut is fragile.

Tender cooked vegetables : carrot, courgette, squash, spinach: well cooked and in reasonable portions, they nourish without irritating.

WHAT MAKES IT WORSE

Eating standing up or in a hurry : a meal swallowed under tension lands in a tense gut: it is the first flare-up trigger.

Chain after chain of coffees : coffee speeds up transit and stirs the gut: every cup too many can repeat the crisis.

Very large portions : even an 'allowed' food becomes problematic in too great a quantity: the dose makes the symptom.

Fizzy drinks and gas : carbonated drinks and too many raw vegetables inflate an already sensitive gut.

Products 'sugar-free' : sweeteners (sorbitol, xylitol, mannitol) are among the worst known bloating agents: read the labels.

Permanent lists of forbidden foods : a permanently restrictive diet impoverishes the microbiome and solves nothing: we test, we reintroduce, we personalise.

DAY TO DAY

The habits that make all the difference

1. **Set up a hot breakfast**

   a porridge, a bowl of rice pudding, buttered toast with a hot drink: the gesture that settles the gut's day, especially in the morning.

2. **Sit down and chew**

   twenty minutes per meal, fork down between bites: eating calmly is already half the remedy.

3. **Keep a two-week mini-diary**

   note meals, stress and symptoms: the real triggers almost always show up, and they are not the ones we think.

4. **Introduce fibres gently**

   start small (a spoonful of psyllium, one kiwi a day) and increase in steps: the gut adapts, it is not rushed.

5. **Explore the FODMAP track with your practitioner**

   certain fermentable sugars feed gas and bloating: a three-stage protocol (reduction, reintroduction, personalisation) can identify yours: never for life, always guided.

This sheet accompanies your practitioner's advice; it does not replace it. See a doctor without delay if there is blood in your stool, unexplained weight loss, fever, night-time pain, or symptoms that appeared after the age of 50.

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