

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)

Female, 35, presenting with loose stools (twice a day), with some urgency and pain. Most recent bout started 8 months previously after a GI bug – has never really cleared up – but originally problem dates from just after her marriage 15 years ago: acute pain, diarrhoea, urgency. Problem intermittent but becoming more frequent, triggered by certain foods (wheat, dairy, possibly fatty foods), worse with stress. Better: Colpermin

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)

Tests 5 months previously: sigmoidoscopy and endoscopy clear, blood tests (inc. LFT) normal

PMH

- Worrier as child
- Junior school: 'doubled up with abdominal pain'
- 4 months ago: upset after death of g/father → thrush in mouth → lozenges → wisdom tooth infection → a/bs → vaginal thrush + athlete's ft

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)

Family history

- Sister and other relatives have IBS

Clinical features

- Bad hayfever in June (since childhood)
- Nose was continuously streaming until 6 months ago when cut wheat and dairy
- Palpitations if nervous
- History of panic attacks

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)

Clinical features (*cont.*)

- Always athlete's foot in summer
- Acne as teenager (still spots on upper back)
- Bad sweating under stress (axillae, soles, hands)
- Cycle regular, but premenstrual irritability
- Bowel worse 2 days before and day 1 of period
- Weight loss of around 12 lb in 8 months

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)

Clinical features (*cont.*)

- Dark hair on back of thighs and upper lip
- Sensitivity around pancreatic area and LLQ

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)

Analysis

- Bowel dysbiosis/permeability, possibly from childhood, associated with food intolerance
- Possible involvement of auxiliary digestive organs, esp. pancreas
- Sympathetic NS activity ↑; parasympathetic activity ↑
- Androgen excess, relative (to oestrogen) progesterone insufficiency

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)

Prescription

1. Tincture/fluid extract
Agrimonia eupatoria
Achillea millefolium
Alchemilla vulgaris
Matricaria recutita
Vaccinium myrtillus
equal parts – 5 ml 3 times daily
2. EO *Lavandula vera*
EO *Citrus aurantium*
in a base of Labrafil – 5 drops 3 times daily

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Prescription (*cont.*)

3. Green (illite) clay
1 tsp in water daily on rising (3 weeks in 4)

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)

Rationale

Agrimonia eupatoria (Agrimony):
astringent, choleric, pancreatic regulator

Achillea millefolium (Yarrow):
digestive stimulant, choleric, spasmolytic,
anti-inflammatory, astringent, vulnerary,
menstrual regulator, luteotropic

Alchemilla vulgaris (Lady's Mantle):
astringent, antidiarrhoeal, luteotropic



Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)

Rationale (*cont.*)

Matricaria recutita (Chamomile):
anti-inflammatory, anti-ulcerogenic,
spasmolytic, carminative, vulnerary,
anti-microbial, mildly sedative,
parasympatholytic, sympatholytic

Vaccinium myrtillus (Bilberry):
astringent, antidiarrhoeal,
anti-inflammatory, antioxidant,
anti-infectious



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Rationale (*cont.*)

Lavandula vera (Lavender):

sedative, antispasmodic,
anti-inflammatory, vulnerary, anti-
infectious, carminative, choleric,
sympatholytic, vagolytic

Citrus aurantium (Petitgrain):

antispasmodic, anti-inflammatory,
eupeptic, sympatholytic, anti-
infectious



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Rationale (*cont.*)

Green (illite) clay:

anti-infectious, intestinal regulator,
antidiarrhoeal, antifungal,
anthelmintic, vulnerary and
antihaemorrhagic, adsorbent,
demulcent



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Outcome

- Progressive improvement over 5 months: normal bowel movements 1-2 x in a.m. with fairly firm stools
- Upsets shorter, less severe and less frequent, and settle after being 'careful' for 2 days
- Upsets definitely associated with reintroduction of wheat (and possibly sugar); however, after 5 months able to tolerate occasional pasty and cream tea without problems

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Outcome

- Addition of pancreatic enzymes to Rx after 3 months led to further improvement
- Weight gain of about 4 lbs
- Big improvement in PMT, and no bowel problems on first day of period
- No early summer hayfever for first time in years
- Less irritated and more relaxed