

GUT HEALTH

common gastrointestinal issues

DIARRHOEA

Characterised as **frequent loose or watery stool**. It may be accompanied by other symptoms such as cramps, pains, urgency to get to the toilet, nausea, and vomiting. Diarrhoea can usually be classified as chronic or acute:

Acute Diarrhoea

Usually caused by some sort of **infection**, from bacteria or viruses. It may last for a **few days to a few weeks**.

Chronic Diarrhoea

Can last a **few weeks to a few months**. This warrants **further investigation** and is common in conditions including IBS, Diverticular Disease and IBD.

It is important to **drink plenty of fluid** and seek advice from a health professional if you can't keep fluid down or if symptoms worsen.



INDIGESTION

Heartburn or indigestion is the feeling of **burning and discomfort** high in the abdomen under the ribcage. This is caused when acidic contents from the stomach escape into the oesophagus. It may be caused by consuming large meals, exercising close to eating, or excessive coffee or alcohol consumption.

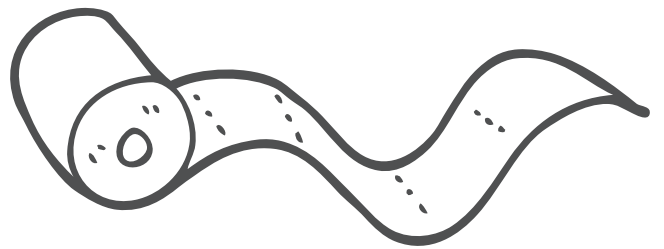
Eating smaller meals and drinking fluids between meals rather than with meals may help, alongside appropriate medication where required.



INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE (IBD)

IBD is a term to describe two diseases: **Crohn's Disease** and **Ulcerative Colitis**.

Both Crohn's Disease and Ulcerative Colitis are **chronic inflammatory conditions** affecting the gastrointestinal tract. Ulcerative Colitis only affects the colon, while Crohn's Disease can affect any part of the digestive tract. Treatment generally involves medication, with the aim for long-term symptom control and management.



CONSTIPATION

Some signs that you are suffering from constipation include:

- A **reduction** in needing to pass stool
- **Hard** and **dry** stools, or even pellets
- **Pain** and/or **straining** when trying to pass stool
- An **increase in time on the toilet** trying to pass stool
- An **unfinished feeling** after passing stool
- **Bloating** and/or **cramps**

In most cases, a change in lifestyle may assist with overcoming constipation. This include **increasing the fibre intake** in your diet (e.g. including wholegrain cereals, fruit and vegetables), drinking **plenty of fluid** and regular **exercise**. If constipation persists, seek advice from a health professional.

COELIAC DISEASE

Coeliac Disease is caused by **sensitivity to the protein gluten** (found in barley, wheat, oats and rye). Gluten causes a reaction in the lining of the small intestines, with the **damage and inflammation** leading to various gastrointestinal and malabsorptive symptoms. It affects 1 in 70 Australians but approximately 80% remain undiagnosed. Symptoms include – diarrhoea, vomiting, weight loss, abdominal pain, bloating and fatigue. The treatment is to simply **avoid and replace gluten** in the diet.



IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME (IBS)

IBS is a **collection of otherwise unexplained gastrointestinal symptoms** that include abdominal pain or discomfort, diarrhoea, constipation (often relieved by going to the toilet) and fluctuating bowel movements. This common condition **may affect up to 30% of Australians** at some point in their life.

The **cause of IBS is still unknown**; however it is thought that stress, emotional changes and a recent attack of gastroenteritis may be a factor in increasing bowel sensitivity leading to the gut symptoms.

