



**EAT FAT,
GET THIN**

**IRRITABLE BOWEL
SOLUTION**

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INTRODUCTION

Chronic disease affects half of all Americans and accounts for 84 percent of our \$3.8 trillion health care bill. This would be depressing except for one simple fact: Most of these chronic illnesses are lifestyle-related diseases. That means they're preventable, treatable and often even reversible through changes in lifestyle factors like [diet](#), [exercise](#), and [stress](#).

More specifically, the food we eat (or don't eat) is the single biggest driver of chronic illness – everything from heart disease to diabetes, cancer to dementia, arthritis to autoimmunity, and more.

Simply put, food can cause disease, but it also can cure disease.

That's what Joanne Schwien learned when she did the *Eat Fat, Get Thin* program. After 40 days, Joanne's blood pressure normalized, her A1C was lower than it has been in 15 years on medication and her aches and pains went away. After the 4th day, she was able to get off both her diabetes and blood pressure medication. And she lost over 50 pounds!

Joanne didn't need one diet for her diabetes, another for her high blood pressure, and yet another for her heartburn. She simply needed real food – anti-inflammatory food, detoxifying food, blood-sugar-balancing food, in other words, the *Eat Fat, Get Thin* plan.

A Pill for Every Ill

As a doctor trained in conventional medicine, I was taught there is a pill for every ill, which is how someone like Joanne ends up on medication. But those meds didn't make her better. She was still sick and had what I call "F.L.C. syndrome" – that's when you Feel Like Crap! And now after 40 days on the *Eat Fat, Get Thin* Plan, Joanne feels better than she can ever remember.

The beauty of the human body is that if you take out the bad stuff and put in the good stuff, the body heals. And it doesn't take long – often just 21 days. And if you are really sick, you can continue. Then in 40 days most chronic problems will dramatically improve or go away entirely.

Why I Created my E-Book Series

That is why I have created this e-book – to create a simple road map for using food as medicine. The science behind it is derived from the emerging view that food is not just calories but information – instructions that control your gene expression, hormones, immune system, and brain chemistry and provide the raw materials to build every cell of your body. The food you eat even determines which gut bacteria flourish in your digestive

tract – good guys or bad guys. Each bite is literally controlling every function of your body. Again, food is not just calories.

Food is information.

The *Eat Fat Get Thin* Plan is scientifically designed to reverse most chronic disease by eliminating all non-food substances that send messages of disease to your body. This way of eating is designed to eliminate cravings and food addiction and be low glycemic, anti-inflammatory, gut healing, brain boosting, and blood-sugar balancing.

It is based on the science of [Functional Medicine](#), which addresses the root causes of illness, not just the symptoms. In other words, Functional Medicine treats the whole organism – not just the organs.

Is There a Different Healing Diet for Each Disease?

The good news is that there is not a separate diet for preventing and reversing *each* of the hundreds of different chronic diseases. There is one basic healthy human diet that gets to the root of *all* illness.

And, yes, there are differences between people – some need more or less of this or that, or have unique needs, or have food sensitivities. But *Eat Fat, Get Thin* is a level setter – it will help you reboot and reset, and then you can make adjustments to find out what is perfect for you.

One Diet, Many Diseases

This e-book is designed to show you how to use the *Eat Fat, Get Thin* Plan to address autoimmunity, diabetes, high cholesterol, hypertension, irritable bowel syndrome, migraines and premenstrual syndrome. But the good news is that if you have ANY chronic illness, *Eat Fat, Get Thin* can have profound benefits.

A few days away from health and happiness

And it doesn't take long. You are just a few days away from health and happiness. This approach won't work for everyone, or work all the time, but for the 80 percent or more of people suffering with chronic disease that is caused by what they are eating – or more importantly, what they are *not* eating – this approach will provide dramatic and quick benefits.

Try it for 21 days. If you are not better, try it for 40 days. And if you are still not better, it is time to see a [Functional Medicine](#) doctor to help you get to deeper roots such as chronic infections, environmental toxins, parasites and more.

Now let's review how this approach can help irritable bowel syndrome.

IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME: THE PROBLEM

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a huge problem that affects about 10 to 23 percent of people worldwide, and between 15 and 20 percent of Americans.

That is almost 1 in 5 people who suffer unnecessarily from something that can often be easily addressed by focusing on the root causes using Functional Medicine.

Not surprisingly, IBS is one of the most common reasons for visits to the doctor – accounting for over 3 million doctor visits annually. And its annual cost is \$2 billion in lost productivity and health care costs. Unfortunately, most doctors have no clue how to treat it or what's really causing it. That's where Functional Medicine comes in.

Functional Medicine is not a new treatment or test or modality. It's a whole new way of thinking about solving the puzzle of chronic symptoms and diseases. IBS provides a fantastic model for illustrating how Functional Medicine works.

IBS is the label that doctors lump symptoms like bloating or gas, distention, constipation, diarrhea, and cramping under. Like its name suggests, IBS occurs when your bowel becomes irritable. But, when you look at your colon during a colonoscopy, you don't really see anything. It looks normal. There is no structural problem, no tumor, no obvious cause. The root problem is dysfunction in your gut ecosystem. Most doctors often suggest eating more fiber or taking Metamucil, but that's generally not very effective.

IBS causes needless misery for millions of people. Fortunately, it is entirely fixable if viewed through the lens of Functional Medicine

What Causes IBS?

In Functional Medicine, we focus on getting to the root cause of disease. But, those of us in Functional Medicine also know that one disease can have many causes (or that one cause can create many diseases – think gluten). If you have 10 people with IBS, for example, the causes may be quite different for each person.

There are really only five causes of all disease: allergens,, toxins, poor diet, stress, and microbes or imbalance of the bugs in your gut. All of these can trigger symptoms and create thousands of diseases.

Once you identify the cause of your irritable bowel, you can get rid of it once and for all. It's extraordinary how simple it is once we know the right thing to do.

There's a funny joke I always tell about how important it is to know what to do. One patient got his appendix out and the doctor sent him a bill for \$1,000. The patient said, "Wow! That's a lot of money for such a simple operation." The doctor replied, "You're right." And he sent him another bill: \$1 for taking out the appendix; \$999 for knowing what needed to be taken out.

Functional Medicine is sort of like that. We know exactly what to do by treating the system – not the symptoms.

Let's talk about a couple of different causes that can give rise to IBS symptoms.

How Food Allergies or Sensitivities Can Lead to IBS

Certain foods can irritate your bowel and digestive system. I'm talking about food sensitivities – not a true allergy like a peanut or shellfish allergy – but rather a more mild food sensitivity that can cause terrible symptoms.

Food sensitivities are very common, and the most widespread thing in food that people react to is [gluten](#). That's the protein found in wheat, barley, rye, and spelt. It's a very common reaction even if you don't have celiac disease, which is a full-blown reaction to gluten. Even if your doctor tells you that your test results for gluten antibodies or celiac are normal, you can still have a severe reaction to gluten.

Dairy is another big problem. About 75 percent of people can't digest the lactose in dairy, which results in bloating, gas, and diarrhea. Even if you don't have lactose intolerance, dairy can create problems. Dairy contains proteins, such as casein and whey, that also can cause irritation and inflammation in your gut.

There are many, many other foods people can have reactions to, including soy, corn, and eggs.

A landmark paper, which was published in the prestigious British medical journal *Gut*, found that eliminating foods identified through delayed food allergy testing (IgG

antibodies) resulted in dramatic improvements in IBS symptoms.¹ Another article, an editorial in *The American Journal of Gastroenterology*, stated clearly that we must respect and recognize the role of food allergies and inflammation in IBS.²

There are some tests available that you can use to assess food sensitivities, including a reaction to gluten and dairy. Check out the “[How to Work with Your Doctor to Get What You Need](#)” guide for more information.

How Gut Imbalances Can Lead to IBS

Imbalances in your gut ecosystem can also trigger or exacerbate IBS. You have an enormous ecosystem of bugs in there with about 500 species in all. In fact, 100 trillion bacterial cells exist within your gut ecosystem. There are 10 times as many bacterial cells as there are your own cells. That makes us all about 10 percent human, if you think about it!

We call this collection of bugs the human microbiome, and these bugs have to be in balance for you to be healthy. If you have bad bugs growing or a yeast overgrowth, or if you have parasites or worms, you can get IBS.

Bad bugs in the wrong spot can also create problems. Most bacteria are in your large intestine, but sometimes they move up and go into the small intestine. That's not very good, because the small intestine should be sterile.

When you eat food that's starchy like bread, cereal, pasta, rice, or sugary food, the bacteria ferment the sugars in the food. It's like the way apple cider blows up in a plastic container in your fridge when it goes bad. That's what happens in your gut.

The bacteria ferment the sugars in the food you eat, and your stomach blows up. That's why you get bloating right after meals.

That's a very common symptom of bacterial overgrowth, or what we used to call “small intestinal bacterial overgrowth” (SIBO). It's a very easy thing to treat if you use the right modality, but most doctors never diagnose or treat this properly.

SIBO can be diagnosed by a breath test, which measures gas production by the

1 Atkinson, W., Sheldon, T.A., Shaath, N., and P.J. Whorwell. (2003). Food elimination based on IgG antibodies in irritable bowel syndrome: A randomized controlled trial. *Gut*. 53:1459–1464.

2 Shanahan, F. and P.J. Whorwell, M.D. (2005). IgG-mediated food intolerance in irritable bowel syndrome: A real phenomenon or an epiphenomenon? *The American Journal of Gastroenterology*. 100:1558–1559.

bacteria, or by a urine test that measures the byproducts of the bacteria after they are absorbed into your system.

Bacterial overgrowth is a real syndrome and was described in a review paper published in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*.³ And, a major paper was recently published in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* that showed using a nonabsorbed antibiotic called Rifaximin (Xifaxan) for 10 days resulted in a dramatic improvement in bloating and overall symptoms of IBS by clearing out the overgrowth of bacteria.⁴

Yeast overgrowth is also common in your gut. It's sort of like a garden where the weeds take over. Yeast overgrowth happens because of taking antibiotics, steroids, birth control pills, or acid-blocking drugs. It also occurs if you eat a lot of sugar, drink alcohol, or are diabetic.

Yeast overgrowth can be treated with an antifungal, such as Diflucan, Nystatin or Sporanox. Antifungal herbs, such as oregano, can also be effective to reboot your gut.

I'm not a big fan of medication, but sometimes for irritable bowel, a good nonabsorbed antibiotic like the aforementioned Xifaxan will clear out the SIBO (bacterial overgrowth) and stop bloating and diarrhea. Using Xifaxan and an antifungal is almost like hitting the reset button on your computer; you reboot your gut and then you start over.

The research tells us that these are the two main causes of irritable bowel — food allergies and overgrowth of bacteria in the small intestine — but there may be others, including a lack of digestive enzymes, parasites living in the gut, zinc or [magnesium, heavy metal toxicity](#), and more.

This is precisely why it is so critically important to personalize treatment based on the unique circumstances that exist for each person who suffers from IBS — the solution is most certainly not one-size-fits-all. But solutions can be found if we look carefully at the underlying causes and treat them.

The key is to reboot your gut by getting rid of the bad stuff and putting in the good stuff.

3 Lin, H. (2004). Small intestinal bacterial overgrowth. *The Journal of the American Medical Association*. 292:852-858.

4 Pimentel, M., Park, S., Mirocha, J., Kane, S., and Y. Kong. (2006). The effect of nonabsorbed oral antibiotics (rifaximin) on the symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome. *Annals of Internal Medicine*. (145)8:557-563.

IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME: THE SOLUTION

To heal your gut, first we remove the bad stuff (bad bugs, yeast, parasites, worms, food sensitivities) and then replace the things that are missing (enzymes, prebiotics from fiber). We re-inoculate with healthy bacteria (probiotics), and we repair the gut with the right nutrients.

We talked about getting rid of the bad stuff (namely, food sensitivities and bugs). Now, we have to add in the good stuff.

While your gut is healing, it's a good idea to add digestive enzymes to help break down the food. You may need those for two or three months.

Then, you need to re-inoculate your gut with healthy bacteria using probiotics such as Bifidobacteria, Lactobacillus, and other strains of bacteria. They help to repopulate the healthy gut flora and allow your digestion to work better. You can also eat probiotic-rich foods like kimchi, kombucha, miso, or sauerkraut. These are all fermented foods that help your gut flora get and stay healthy.

Vitamin A, zinc, omega-3 fats (fish oil), evening primrose oil, and glutamine all help repair the gut. We also use herbs like quercetin and turmeric to reduce inflammation and heal a leaky gut.

Normally, your intestinal cells are stuck together like Legos. A leaky gut occurs when the gut lining is interrupted. When the intestinal cells come apart or separate, food proteins and bacteria leak in and they start causing inflammation.

Leaky gut can create IBS but also joint pain, fatigue, cognitive problems, depression, allergies, congestion, and rashes like eczema. Many symptoms and diseases are caused by leaky gut.

In Functional Medicine, the gut is one of the most important systems to focus on and to get working well, because that's the seat of your health. It's connected to everything else.

WHAT TO EAT

General Dietary Recommendations to Help Normalize IBS and Heal Leaky Gut

The first step in healing your gut is to eat a healthy diet. Increase your consumption of whole foods rich in phytonutrients, which are plant molecules that give your body the nutrients it needs.

Here are some very practical tips you'll see in *Eat Fat, Get Thin*. This way of eating is full of plant-based fiber and healing nutrients. It cuts out most of the common food sensitivities (gluten and dairy). It is also very low in starch, sugar and other foods that cause the bad bugs and yeast to grow and cause fermentation, bloating, and gas.

- **Eat a plant-based diet**, and be sure to include potassium-rich foods. Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds high in fiber, healthy fats, and nutrients such as calcium, magnesium, and the all-important potassium. Potassium helps our bodies eliminate excess sodium in our bodies and relax blood vessel walls, both of which help lower blood pressure. The Recommended Daily Allowance (RDA) for potassium is 4700 mg per day, but most people get only about half this amount in their diet. Choose from these foods to increase your daily intake: Swiss chard, spinach, kale, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, crimini mushrooms, tomato, green beans, and avocado. Non-starchy veggies should fill 50 to 75 percent of your plate
- **Don't eat carbohydrates alone**. Combine protein, fat, and carbohydrates in every meal.
- **Pull the sugar**. A diet full of empty calories and quickly absorbed sugar, liquid sugar calories, and refined carbohydrates – all of which convert to sugar – creates high insulin levels, eventually leading to insulin resistance and type 2 diabetes. Chronically high insulin levels lead to many problems, including inflammation, high blood pressure, poor sex drive, increased risk for cancer, and depression. The most important thing you can do to reduce your risk of type 2 diabetes and obesity or reverse its impact is to eliminate or dramatically reduce sugar in all its many disguises.
- **Eat Fat**: Use ONLY good, healthy fats and clean (grass-fed or sustainably raised) animal foods. You should include fat at each meal. The best sources are avocados, extra-virgin olive oil, nuts and seeds, extra-virgin coconut butter, organic full-fat

coconut milk, whole organic eggs, fatty fish (sardines, wild salmon, mackerel or herring), grass-fed lamb, bison, or beef or organic poultry.

- **Stock up on real foods.** Whole, unprocessed real foods balance your blood sugar, reduce inflammation and oxidative stress, and improve your liver detoxification to prevent or reverse insulin resistance and diabetes. Whole, real foods turn on all the right gene messages, promote a healthy metabolism, reverse insulin resistance and diabetes, and prevent aging and age-related diseases like diabetes and heart disease.
- **Eat about 4 to 6 ounces of protein with each meal.** If you make a fist, that's approximately portion size we're talking about per meal.
- **Avoid all processed junk food**, including sodas, juices, and diet drinks, which impact sugar and lipid metabolism. Liquid sugar calories are the biggest contributors to obesity and diabetes and heart disease.
- **Avoid all grains and beans** (including chickpeas, lentils, and even peanuts, which are actually beans).
- **Eat only fat, protein, and veggies for breakfast.** You can choose from a variety of protein shakes or delicious egg recipes (omega-3 eggs are ideal) to wake up your metabolism first thing in the morning.
- **Limit alcohol consumption.** Drinking too much alcohol can increase blood pressure and interfere with good health. Researchers estimate heavy drinking is responsible for about 8 percent of all cases of high blood pressure in the U.S. Alcohol also impacts triglycerides and creates blood sugar imbalances. For men, limit alcohol to no more than two drinks per day. For women, limit alcohol to no more than one drink per day. (One drink is defined as a 12-ounce beer, a five-ounce glass of wine, or a 1.5-ounce shot of liquor.)
- **Avoid all dairy and gluten products.**
- **Drink a minimum of 8 glasses** of pure, clean water throughout the day.
- **Eat the rainbow.** Eat at least 8 to 10 servings of vegetables every day, which contain disease-fighting vitamins, minerals, fiber, phytonutrients, antioxidants, and anti-inflammatory molecules.
- **Use salt**, because when you cut down carbs your body needs more salt.
- **Avoid highly refined cooking oils** such as corn, soy or most vegetable oils.
- **Try not to eat three hours before bed.**

The 21-Day Meal Plan

To help you jumpstart your *Eat Fat, Get Thin* 21-Day Plan, we are providing a step-by-step, delicious meal plan for the first week. All of these recipes can be found in my book, *Eat Fat, Get Thin* and we even included a few vegan friendly options (look for items noting [V]).

WEEK 1

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner
Monday	Cocoa Bliss Smoothie V	Chicken Chop Salad with Hearts of Palm and Creamy Herb Dressing	Crispy Seared Duck Breast with Blueberry Balsamic Sauce Side: Asparagus
Tuesday	Broccoli Sausage Frittata	Quick Chicken Breast with Spanish Romesco Sauce	Braised Chicken with Creamy Cashew Gravy Side: Brussels Sprouts
Wednesday	Ginger Spice Smoothie V	Basic Salad with Vinaigrette Dressing V	Spiced Lamb and Vegetable Shepherd's Pie Side: Green Beans
Thursday	Quick Herb and Avocado Omelet	Poached Chicken Breast	Clam Chowder Side: Broccoli

Friday	Kiwi Lime Smoothie	Bistro Flank Steak Salad with Baby Green Beans	Sun-dried Tomato and Turkey Burgers with Avocado Cream Side: Broccolini
	V		
Saturday	Triple Green Smoothie	Turkey Lettuce Wraps with Creamy Cashew Lime Dressing	Spiced Beef Taco Wraps with Guacamole Side: Snap peas
	V		
Sunday	Almond Pancakes with Berries	Beef and Veggie Stuffed Peppers	Lemon-Dill Shrimp and Avocado Salad Side: Zucchini

The *Eat Fat, Get Thin* Staples List

Below is a list of all the staple items you will need for the *Eat Fat, Get Thin* 21-Day Plan, as well as a list of the ingredients you will need for the Week 1 meal plan provided above.

- Extra-virgin olive oil
- Extra-virgin coconut oil
- Other healthy oils, such as walnut, sesame, flax, or avocado
- Grass-fed butter or ghee
- Nut butters (raw, if possible), such as almond, cashew, coconut
- Nuts, such as walnuts, almonds, pecans, cashews
- Seeds, like hemp, chia, flax, pumpkin, and sesame
- Tahini (sesame seed paste)
- Unsweetened canned full-fat coconut milk

- Unsweetened hemp milk, almond milk, coconut milk
- Canned or jarred Kalamata olives
- Frozen blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, unsweetened acai berry puree
- Almond meal
- Arrowroot
- Apple cider, Balsamic, unseasoned rice, red wine, white wine vinegars
- Reduced-sodium, gluten-free tamari
- Reduced-sodium broth (vegetable or chicken)
- Dijon mustard (look for pure mustard without sugar or chemicals)
- Sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- Capers
- Seasonings and dried spices, such as turmeric, cayenne pepper, thyme, rosemary, chili powder, cumin, sage, oregano, onion powder, cinnamon, coriander, cilantro, paprika, and parsley

Shopping List for Week 1

Vegetables:

You can eat an unlimited amount of non-starchy vegetables, such as these:

- Cauliflower (2 heads)
- Asparagus (1 bundle)
- Leeks (3 small)
- Shallots (2 small)
- Zucchini (3 small)
- Broccolini (1 bundle)
- Red bell peppers (5)
- Snap peas (½ pound)
- Broccoli (2 heads)
- Avocado (8)
- Green beans (12 ounces)

- Spinach (1 pound)
- Scallions (7)
- Grape tomatoes (½ pint)
- Roma tomatoes (7)
- Celery (10 stalks)
- Kale (1 bunch)
- Red onion (1)
- Yellow onions (4)
- Baby field greens (1 pound)
- Butter lettuce (2 heads)
- Red cabbage (1 head)
- Brussels sprouts (2 pounds)

Great resources: Local farmer's markets, Cascadian Farm, Earthbound Farm, Maine Coast Sea Vegetables, Miracle Noodle, Stahlbush Island Farms.

Fruits:

Choose organic, seasonal, local produce whenever possible. (Sometimes organic fruits and vegetables are best purchased frozen during winter months.)

- Fresh Blueberries (2 pints)
- Kiwi (2)
- Limes (8)
- Lemons (4)

Non-Dairy Milks:

- Almond Milk (1 32-ounce carton)
- Coconut Milk (4 13-ounce cans)
- Cashew Milk (1 32-ounce carton)

Butter and Oils:

- Grass-fed butter
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- Extra-virgin coconut oil
- Avocado oil (small bottle)

Poultry, Meat, Fish, Eggs:

Look for organic, grass- or range-fed, antibiotic- and hormone-free poultry and eggs.

- Chicken breasts (5 ½ pounds)
- Fresh small clams (4 pounds)
- Omega-3 eggs (1 ½ dozen)
- Italian chicken sausage (2 links)
- Flank steak (1 ½ pounds)
- Ground dark turkey meat (2 ¼ pounds)
- Grass-fed beef (2 ½ pounds)
- Ground lamb (1 pound)
- Duck breasts (4 6-ounce breasts)
- Bay shrimp (1 ¼ pounds)

Great resources: Applegate Farms, Peaceful Pastures, Whole Foods Market, local farmers' markets, Crown Prince Natural, Ecofish, SeaBear, Vital Choice Seafood

Fresh Herbs:

- Parsley (1 bunch)
- Cilantro (1 bunch)
- Ginger (1 3-inch piece)
- Basil (1 bunch)
- Dill (1 bunch)
- Thyme (2 bunches)

Spices, Dried Herbs, Condiments:

Choose from any of the following to enhance your recipes and taste experience (watch out for added chemicals, sugars, MSG, and hidden sources of gluten or dairy):

- Garlic (5 heads)
- Nutmeg
- Red pepper flakes
- Bay leaves
- Saffron
- Chipotle powder

- Organic mayonnaise
- Tarragon
- Red pepper
- Cayenne pepper

Great Resources: Flavorganics, Frontier Natural Products Co-Op, Penzey's Spices, Rapunzel Pure Organics, Seeds of Change, Simply Organic, The Spice Hunter

Canned Foods:

- Diced tomatoes (2 cans)
- Hearts of palm (1 can)
- Roasted red bell peppers (1 8-ounce jar)
- Sun-dried tomatoes (1 8-ounce jar)
- Clam broth (16 ounces)

Other:

- Unsweetened cocoa powder
- No-alcohol pure vanilla extract
- Coconut flour
- Baking soda
- Duck fat (1 pound)
- Silken tofu (4 ounces)

WHAT TO TAKE: SUPPLEMENTS

Supplements are important. Along with a healthy diet and exercise program, they can dramatically reduce your IBS.

I have sourced the highest-quality supplements that are tested for purity and potency and are all absorbable and free of contaminants and allergens. You can get all of the recommended supplements bundled together in my online store. Look for [The Healthy Digestive Support Kit](#).

This kit includes:

- PhytoMulti by Metagenics multivitamin (Two tablets a day with food)
- OmegaGenics EPA-DHA 720 fish oil (Two softgels a day with food)
- CandiBactin-BR (Two capsules three times a day for a month) for cleaning out bacterial overgrowth.
- CandiBactin-AR (Two capsules three times a day for a month) for yeast overgrowth.
- Add digestive enzymes for two to four months. I like Enzyme Complete Isogest 2 (Two capsules with each meal).
- Use high-potency probiotics. With my patients, I use Ther-Biotic Complete (Two capsules twice a day).
- Add gut-healing nutrients. I recommend a powder called GI Revive by Designs for Health (One teaspoon in water once or twice a day) or GI Integrity by Pure Encapsulations, which is glutamine (Four capsules twice a day).
- If you are constipated (not having one or two normal bowel movements a day) take Magnesium Citrate by Pure Encapsulations (Two capsules, twice a day). If you need more, you can increase the dose until you have daily bowel movements. If you take too much, you will get loose stools so just take less. And, if you have kidney failure, ask your doctor first before using magnesium.
- You should also consider testing for food sensitivities and for stool issues (again, see the “How to Work with Your Doctor to Get What You Need” guide for more information). Consider Cyrex 3 testing for gluten sensitivity when conventional tests for gluten are negative. You may also consider Cyrex 4 testing for gluten-associated cross-reactive foods and Cyrex 10 testing for a broader food sensitivity panel. This can reveal other unexpected triggers such as eggs or certain vegetables or even spices.

By following this approach, most people can heal their irritable bowel. If you are not getting better utilizing these strategies, you may need medical help.

You may need treatment for SIBO or bacterial overgrowth. Talk to your doctor about Xifaxan (a non-absorbed antibiotic) for bacterial overgrowth, 550 mg twice a day for 10 days; and Diflucan, 100 mg a day for three to four weeks, to kill the yeast. Your doctor must prescribe these medications.

In some cases, treatment for parasites or worms is needed based on the testing.

WHAT TO DO: OTHER LIFESTYLE FACTORS

Exercise

Exercise is not a luxury. It's a necessity when it comes to preventing almost all chronic disease, from heart disease to cancer, from dementia to diabetes, from osteoporosis to osteoarthritis. You cannot age successfully without it. It is simply how we are designed.

I encourage 30 to 45 minutes of cardiovascular exercise at least six times a week.

You may try interval training if you are feeling stronger. I also encourage strength training to build muscle and reduce body fat composition.

Reduce Stress

Stress alone can cause many chronic diseases. Take a heart attack. Stress often triggers a cascade of events that cause a heart attack.

Finding ways to manage stress and to relax is essential for dealing with nearly all chronic health conditions, including irritable bowel disease.

Learn to reduce stress by doing regular relaxation exercises such as yoga, tai chi, meditation, breathing, guided imagery, or whatever it takes to engage the relaxation nervous system, which can lower your inflammation and blood sugar levels as well as increase metabolism and [help with your overall health](#).

Try classes, buy CDs (you can try [my UltraCalm audio program](#)), try therapy, or just go out and have fun. Do whatever it takes to hit the pause button on a daily basis and maintain your health

Sleep

I used to think that “MD” stood for “medical deity” and meant I didn’t have to follow the same sleep rules as every other human being. I stayed up late working long shifts in the emergency room, ignoring the demands of my body. It wasn’t until I learned that shift work leads to a shortened life expectancy that I quit.

Unfortunately, our lives are infiltrated with constant stimuli that keep us revved up until the moment we go to bed. It’s no wonder so many of us have trouble getting restful sleep.

Instead of pushing through until your head hits the pillow, try to take a little “holiday” in the two hours before bed. Create a sleep ritual – a special set of little things you do before bed – in order to guide your body into a deep, healing sleep.

Here are some tips on how to restore your natural sleep rhythm. It may take weeks or months, but using these tools in a coordinated way will eventually reset your biological rhythms:

- **Practice the regular rhythms of sleep.** Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day.
- **Use your bed for sleep and romance only**, not for television or even reading.
- **Create an aesthetic environment that encourages sleep.** Use serene and restful colors and eliminate clutter and distraction.
- **Create total darkness and quiet.** Consider using eyeshades and earplugs.
- **Avoid caffeine.**
- **Avoid alcohol.** It may help you get to sleep initially, but it causes interruptions throughout the night, resulting in poor-quality sleep.
- **Get at least 20 minutes exposure to daylight daily.** The light from the sun enters your eyes and triggers your brain to release specific chemicals and hormones like melatonin that are vital to healthy sleep, mood, and aging.
- **Eat no later than three hours before bed.** Eating a heavy meal prior to bed will lead to a bad night’s sleep.
- **Don’t exercise vigorously after dinner.** It excites the body and makes it more difficult to get to sleep.
- **Write your worries down.** One hour before bed, write down the things that are causing you [anxiety](#) and make your to-do list for the next day to reduce your worry. It will free up your mind and energy to move into deep and restful sleep.

- **Take a hot salt/soda aromatherapy bath.** Raising your body temperature before bed helps to induce sleep. A hot bath also relaxes your muscles and reduces tension physically and psychically. By adding 1 to 1 ½ cups Epsom salt (magnesium sulfate) and 1 to 1 ½ cups baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) to your bath, you will gain the benefits of magnesium absorbed through your skin and the alkaline-balancing effects of the baking soda, both of which help with sleep.
- **Get a massage or stretch before bed.** This helps relax the body, making it easier to fall asleep.
- **Warm your middle.** This raises your core temperature and helps trigger the proper chemistry for sleep. A hot-water bottle, heating pad – or a warm body – can do the trick.
- **Avoid medications that interfere with sleep.** These include sedatives (which are used to treat insomnia, but ultimately lead to dependence and disruption of normal sleep rhythms), antihistamines, stimulants, cold medication, steroids, and headache medication that contains caffeine.
- **Use herbal therapies.** Try 200 mg of passionflower, or 320 mg to 480 mg of valerian root extract standardized to 0.2 percent valerenic acid one hour before bed.
- **Take 200 mg to 400 mg of [magnesium](#) citrate or glycinate before bed.** This relaxes the nervous system and muscles.
- **Other supplements and herbs can be helpful in getting some shuteye.** Try calcium, theanine (an amino acid from green tea), GABA, 5-HTP, and magnolia. (I like a product called Kavinace UltraPM that has a form of GABA, melatonin, and 5-HTP all in one. It works well for many of my patients.)
- **Try 1 mg to 3 mg of [melatonin](#) at night,** which can help stabilize your sleep rhythms.
- **Get a relaxation, meditation or guided imagery CD.** Any of these may help you get to sleep

CONCLUSION

We have the science, the understanding and the tools to deal with this chronic problem and the suffering it causes one in five people. There is no need to wait for any more studies. I have been treating IBS in my practice for over 15 years with dramatic success.

In fact, just recently, one of my patients told me that for the first time in his life he didn't have any more stomach pains or digestive problems. It had previously been so bad that he had to have a phone installed in his bathroom!

By taking these steps and seeking out the underlying causes of IBS, you can dramatically improve your health and overcome your digestive disorder.

If you are willing to tweak your diet and lifestyle and take a few supplements, your health may change dramatically – and so will your life.

If you have tried the *Eat Fat, Get Thin* 21-Day Plan for up to 40 days and are still not completely better, then you should seek out a Functional Medicine practitioner. You can come see me or one of my Functional Medicine doctors at [The UltraWellness Center](#) or at the [Cleveland Clinic Center for Functional Medicine](#), where we treat people from all over the world. You can also find a trained practitioner near you through the [Institute for Functional Medicine](#).

The answers are right in front of you. Treat the underlying causes of your illness, and you will begin to experience vibrant health once more.