

## Doctor Discussion Guide:

# Bowel Urgency

Talking about bowel urgency can feel uncomfortable – but it's an important step toward finding relief. Use this guide to prepare for your next appointment.



## 1. Before Your Appointment

- **Track your symptoms:** Bring your completed Symptom Tracker.
- **List your medications & supplements:** Include prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs and vitamins.
- **Write down your top concerns:** Think about how urgency impacts your work, social life, travel and emotional health.
- **Bring support if needed:** A trusted friend, family member or caregiver can help you feel more comfortable.

## 2. Questions to Ask Your Doctor

- What could be causing my bowel urgency?
- Are my current medications contributing to it?
- What tests might help identify the cause?
- What treatment options are available (dietary, lifestyle, medications)?
- How do I know if my urgency is linked to IBD, IBS or another condition?
- Are there mental health resources or support groups you recommend?

## 3. What to Share With Your Doctor

- **Frequency & severity:** How often urgency occurs and how intense it feels (1–10 scale).
- **Timing & triggers:** When symptoms occur (morning, after meals, with stress, certain foods).
- **Accidents or near misses:** How often and under what circumstances.
- **Impact on daily life:** Work, travel, social events, relationships, emotional health.
- **Other symptoms:** Pain, diarrhea, constipation, blood in stool, weight changes.

## 4. During the Appointment

- Be open and honest, even if it feels embarrassing. Doctors are used to these conversations.
- Show your Symptom Tracker to help your doctor see patterns.
- Take notes or ask your support person to write down key information.
- Ask for written instructions or resources before leaving.

## 5. After the Appointment

- Review any new instructions or prescriptions.
- Update your Symptom Tracker as you try new strategies.
- Schedule follow-ups to monitor progress.
- Visit [NAFC.org/bowelurgency](https://NAFC.org/bowelurgency) for tip sheets, trackers, patient stories and other free resources.

*You deserve answers, support and care.*

Talking about bowel urgency is the first step to finding relief.