

# TALKING WITH YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT IBS-C

Having a conversation with your doctor about something as personal as IBS is never easy, but with any luck, this guide will make it a little easier. Bring this sheet with you to your next appointment so you don't overlook important topics, and use the back for notes so you don't forget anything the doctor says.

## GETTING STARTED

For many people, the most difficult conversation is the very first one – an enormous number of patients fail to seek help as soon as they should because they can't bear the thought of bringing up the subject. Truth is, it doesn't have to be embarrassing. Here are a few thoughts to make that initial interaction comfortable:

- Remember that your doctor deals with issues like yours all the time – they're used to it.
- General questions or comments are often easier than specific ones. Try something like "I'm wondering about IBS..." and let your doctor take it from there.
- And don't forget what we always say at NAFC: ***There's No Shame in Being Human™***.

### CAUSES:

- What is causing my symptoms?
- Will it get worse if left untreated?
- What tests do I need to take?
- Is it related to another illness or medical condition?
- Is this a temporary condition or something that may last a while? If so, how long does it usually last?

### TREATMENTS:

- What treatments are available?
- What do you recommend?
- Are there any side effects?
- What types of results can I expect with treatment?
- Are there alternate treatments that I should consider?

### BEHAVIORS:

- Are there things I can do on my own to improve my condition?
- Should I change my diet or drinking habits?
- Are there any foods you recommend to take or avoid?
- Can a fiber supplement help?
- Are there exercises that can help?

### PRODUCTS:

- What should I look for in a protective garment?
- Are there any particular products you recommend?
- Are there any brands I should look for?

### MEDICATIONS:

- Are medications available for my condition/symptoms?
- What is their track record – have they been found to be particularly successful?
- How do I take it?
- What should I expect – how will it affect me?
- How long does it typically take to see results?
- What sort of side effects should I be aware of?

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