

Module 4 Lesson 7

Transcript

Today's lesson is on irritable bowel syndrome, AKA IBS and stress. We're devoting a lesson to IBS because of how common it is. In fact, IBS is the most common functional gastrointestinal disorder. Worldwide about 10 to 15% of people suffer from it. That's a ton of people and then there's stress. I could go into statistics on stress, but I'm pretty sure we all have an idea of what that would look like. Everyone experiences some stress on some level and for many of us that's a lot of stress on a very high level. My game plan for this lesson is to take you through what IBS is, go over what the treatment options are and discuss dietary recommendations for clients with IBS. Before we really get into things, I want to address that there's a whole lot of potty talk in this lesson and I hope you get used to it.

You're probably used to it already and find a way to feel comfortable talking about poops and farts because if you're comfortable your clients will be to. Use language that you feel is respectful and not slang, it's going to be up to you to be professional, try to steer clear of words people might take offense to and definitely don't use childish words either. I'll set the example with this story. I had a client whose only reason for coming to me was that she felt bloated and gassy a lot. Sometimes she had diarrhea, sometimes she was constipated but she was mostly bloated a lot. She usually felt relief with a bowel movement. She had no idea when she woke up in the morning if she was going to have a flat stomach and a good day or a hard bloated stomach and frequent trips to the ladies room.

After our thorough intake, I shipped her off to a GI doc. I told her it sounded an awful lot like IBS and didn't sound like a food allergy, celiac, ulcer, reflux or gallbladder issue. The IBS diagnosis was confirmed and I could do my best work because I knew what I was dealing with. In one month of working together, she reported an 80% reduction in her symptoms. While she had occasional flare ups and probably still does, she knows how to avoid triggering herself and I even get an occasional email just to check in but overall she's really managed and she's a true success story. IBS is a chronic condition. It's characterized by bloating, cramping, constipation, diarrhea or both.

Sometimes there's excessive gas and mucus in the stool. Most of the time IBS is not severe but it's a lifelong thing and people experience periods of time with bouts of flareups and bouts of pain free living. While we tend to see IBS in women more than men other similarities are that IBS is more common in people under 50 years old, may have a family history and it's common also that mental health issues such as anxiety and depression are present. Triggers are usually certain specific foods, stress and hormones. No two people are going to have exactly the same experience with this

disorder. Some are only constipated, some only experience diarrhea, some are a mix of the two but we all experience awful bloating.

We're going to talk about Crohn's disease, a more severe form of IBS in another lesson. The exact cause of IBS is unknown but it may be caused by overly strong or overly weak muscle contractions in the digestive track, poor coordination of signals in the nervous system between the brain and GI track, inflammation in the GI track, infection or bacterial overgrowth after a bout of diarrhea, disruption or imbalance in the gut microbiome, so you'll want to get your client to a good GI doc for diagnosing. They may be put on meds or they may not, so find out and then focus on these tips for management of IBS. When you're working with an IBS client, the pillar of stress less cannot be over emphasized. Stress is a huge trigger for IBS and can cause intense flare ups. Great results are found in people who do biofeedback, go for therapy and adopt a stress management routine.

Okay, moving right along. I have a handout on food triggers and that's the first place you're going to want to intervene. Once you know the trigger foods, you can eliminate them. They can be reintroduced slowly or avoided entirely depending on the client. Also, you want to think about sweating often. Exercise is a great tool for eliminating bloat and returning muscles, even the muscles in the GI track to their best condition. Sleep deep is also a pillar that's super important for IBS sufferers sleep deprivation, increases IBS symptoms and can be a huge trigger and also one that people may not be thinking about at all. It's really up to you to make them aware of that. Really and truly, I believe the non food triggers are as important as the food triggers here, so give them the weight they deserve in your sessions. So let's review the takeaway messages here.

IBS is a chronic condition characterized by bloating, cramping, constipation, diarrhea, or both. Triggers are usually certain foods, stress and hormones. The exact cause of IBS is unknown and it's a very individualized condition, meaning every person has a different experience with it. Once IBS is diagnosed by a doctor, work with your client on reducing stress, getting an exercise and getting enough sleep. And on the diet side, use a food journal to pinpoint which foods trigger symptoms. Once you nail those down, work with the client on how to best avoid those foods while getting proper nutrition from foods that don't aggravate their IBS. Here is where we are special and good at what we do. Your client may be suffering but you are empowering them with tools and support that is customized and offers tons of support built into your plan. IBS is not a doomsday sentence. With your guidance a client can live a very nutritious life. I'll see you in the next lesson.