

*MEDIA TOOLKIT*

*APRIL 2020*

# April Is Irritable Bowel Syndrome Awareness Month



*PREPARED BY*  
International Foundation for  
Gastrointestinal Disorders



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## About IBS Awareness Month

*In 1997, IFFGD designated April as IBS Awareness Month on the U.S. National Health Observances calendar. During April, we work to focus attention on important health messages about IBS diagnosis, treatment, and quality of life issues.*



## Why Raise Awareness about IBS?

Worldwide, an estimate of 10 to 15% of the population is affected by irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), and 25 to 45 million Americans are living with this gastrointestinal (GI) disorder.

Individuals who have been newly diagnosed or living with any GI disorder like IBS will have questions, and often those questions go unanswered.





# IBS AWARENESS MONTH 2020

**April is Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) Awareness Month.** Worldwide, an estimate of 10 to 15% of the population is affected by IBS, and 25 to 45 million Americans currently live with this gastrointestinal (GI) disorder. Often, individuals who suffer from IBS find themselves on a quest for answers about their overall health, how to manage their symptoms, and treatment availability.

IFFGD encourages patients to share their questions on social media using hashtags **#IBSAwarenessMonth** and **#IWant2Know**. This social campaign is designed to generate a conversation about IBS and to raise awareness about the importance of improving the quality of life for those living with this GI condition.

"There is a wide range of symptoms associated with IBS, which is concerning for patients living with this illness," said Ceciel T. Rooker, President of IFFGD. Symptoms associated with IBS can flare up unexpectedly and change over time or even daily.

**IBS is characterized by the following:**

- Recurring or chronic bouts of abdominal pain or discomfort in association with eating and/or drinking.
- Changes in bowel frequency or consistency, such as IBS with diarrhea and/or IBS with constipation.
- Other symptoms, such as bloating, gas, or urgency may also occur.

Ms. Rooker added, "When their questions about IBS symptoms or treatment options go unanswered, many patients are left to navigate life with the uncertainty of such a debilitating and life-altering condition."



## What is IBS

*Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a disorder characterized by abdominal pain or discomfort and altered bowel habit (chronic or recurrent diarrhea, constipation, or both – either mixed or in alternation).\**

\*aboutIBS.org

### Key Messaging

- IBS affects between 25 and 45 million people in the United States.
- About 2 in 3 IBS sufferers are female.
- IBS affects people of all ages, even children.
- Worldwide it's estimated that 10 to 15% of the population has IBS.
- In a survey conducted by IFFGD, nearly 2,000 patients reported that they suffered from IBS symptoms for 6.6 years before being diagnosed.
- Symptoms of IBS vary and are sometimes contradictory. Diarrhea can alternate with constipation.
- Long-term symptoms of IBS can disrupt personal and professional activities and limit individual potential.

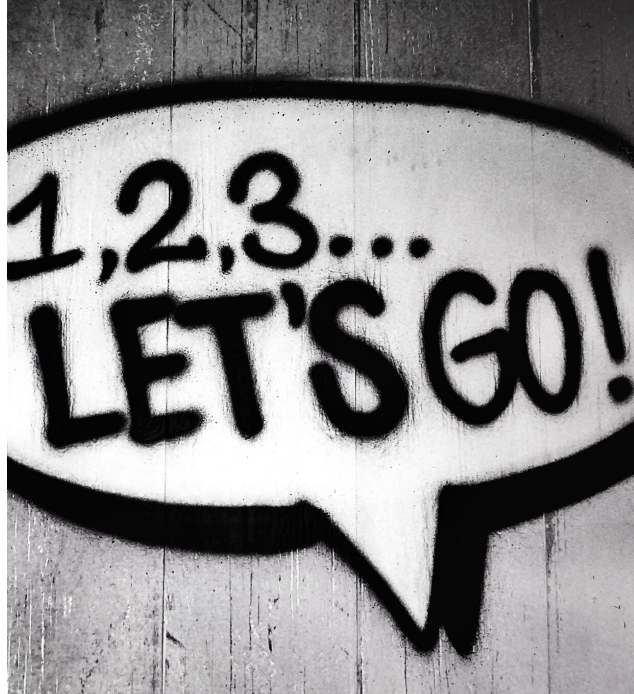


## Get Involved

- Hang up flyers at your neighborhood coffee shop or hand them out at your local market to raise awareness for digestive diseases. If you are interested, please contact us.
- Organize an event at your local community center to share the effects of digestive diseases, and encourage attendees to find out more at IFFGD.org.
- Use key messaging and social media to spread awareness using the unique hashtags #IBSAwarenessMonth and #IWant2Know.

*Raising awareness about IBS and other conditions can translate into larger federal investments in research activities and a stronger commitment from industry to develop new treatment options.*

*- aboutIBS.org*



## Spread the Word



@IFFGD



@IFFGD



@digestivehealthmatters



[www.YouTube.com/IFFGD](http://www.YouTube.com/IFFGD)



# Social Media Toolkit

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IBS Awareness Month 2020: #IBSAwarenessMonth  
#IWant2Know

## **General Messaging**

- April is #IBSAwarenessMonth. How will you raise awareness? #IWant2Know aboutIBS.org
- Learn about #IBS today at [www.aboutIBS.org](http://www.aboutIBS.org) #IBSAwarenessMonth #IWant2Know aboutIBS.org
- 10 to 15% of the population worldwide suffer from IBS #IBSAwarenessMonth #IWant2Know aboutIBS.org
- I support #IBSAwarenessMonth and efforts to increase public knowledge to support those living with IBS #IWant2Know aboutIBS.org
- Approximately 20 to 40% of all visits to gastroenterologists are due to IBS symptoms #IBSAwarenessMonth #IWant2Know aboutIBS.org

## **"IBS: More Questions than Answers?" 2020 Messaging**

- How common is IBS? IBS is the most common functional gastrointestinal (GI) disorder. It affects males and females, adults and children. #IBSAwarenessMonth #IWant2Know aboutIBS.org
- How serious is IBS? The impact of IBS varies with each person. For some people, IBS causes symptoms that are manageable, for others, IBS may severely reduce their quality of life or be disabling. #IBSAwarenessMonth #IWant2Know aboutIBS.org
- What are the symptoms of IBS? Abdominal pain is a key symptom of IBS when it is associated with changes in bowel habits, such as, periods of diarrhea and/or constipation. #IBSAwarenessMonth #IWant2Know aboutIBS.org
- Should I document my symptoms? Keeping a diary for one to two weeks may help identify factors that bring on symptoms or make your condition worse. #IBSAwarenessMonth #IWant2Know aboutIBS.org
- What are some common foods/drinks that affect IBS symptoms? Four common food/drink offenders are caffeine, chocolate, fiber, and nuts. Speak with your healthcare provider if you notice changes in your symptoms. #IBSAwarenessMonth #IWant2Know aboutIBS.org



# Links to Campaign Images

IBS Awareness Month 2020: #IBSAwarenessMonth  
#IWant2Know

## Link to Facebook IBS Awareness Images

<http://bit.ly/2ux1prj>

## Link to Twitter IBS Awareness Images

<http://bit.ly/2SmuA9x>

## Link to Instagram IBS Awareness Images

<http://bit.ly/31QF7wN>



## Link to IBS Awareness Flyer

<http://bit.ly/2Hk6eqz>



# About IffGD

IFFGD, the International Foundation for Gastrointestinal Disorders, is a Public Charity designated under the U.S. IRS code 501(c)(3). We are a registered nonprofit education and research organization.

## **Our Mission**

Our mission is to inform, assist, and support people affected by gastrointestinal (GI) disorders.

IFFGD was founded in 1991 by one person struggling with the challenges imposed by a chronic GI disorder. Many others, from all walks of life, have joined with us.

We work with patients, families, physicians, nurses, practitioners, investigators, regulators, employers, and others to: broaden understanding about GI disorders, support or encourage research, and improve digestive health in adults and children.

# Contact Us

We offer general information on our IFFGD family of websites related to various gastrointestinal (GI) disorders. We are not a health care organization. We do not provide specific personal medical information or financial assistance.

Media Contact, Hayley McCorkle: [Media@iffgd.org](mailto:Media@iffgd.org)  
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For more information about IBS visit: [aboutIBS.org](http://aboutIBS.org)  
For information about IBS with Constipation visit:  
[www.YouandConstipation.org](http://www.YouandConstipation.org)

For resources on other gastrointestinal disorders provided by IFFGD visit: [www.iffgd.org](http://www.iffgd.org), [aboutGastroparsis.org](http://aboutGastroparsis.org), [aboutGERD.org](http://aboutGERD.org), [aboutIncontinence.org](http://aboutIncontinence.org), [GIMotility.org](http://GIMotility.org), [aboutKidsGI.org](http://aboutKidsGI.org), [aboutConstipation.org](http://aboutConstipation.org)