

# Mindfulness program may benefit patients with irritable bowel syndrome

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Adults with irritable bowel syndrome experienced fewer gastrointestinal

symptoms after they participated in a mindfulness program meant to reduce stress. Results of the study are published in *Neurogastroenterology & Motility*.

In the study, 53 women and 15 men with [irritable bowel syndrome](#) participated in an 8-week mindfulness-based stress reduction class.

Most participants experienced significant improvements from pre-treatment to 3 months follow up regarding gastrointestinal symptoms, quality of life, and anxiety related to [gastrointestinal symptoms](#). Although increases in 3 of the 5 measured facets of mindfulness were found, increases in the ability to stay in the present moment and act with awareness seemed especially important.

"This study shows that people with irritable bowel syndrome can have significant improvements in their symptoms and quality of life without medication or diet change, just by participating in a mindfulness based stress reduction class," said senior author Kirsten Tillisch, MD, of the University of California, Los Angeles. "Further, it implicates a specific aspect of mindfulness as particularly important: acting with awareness. It appears that by improving this moment to moment awareness in their daily actions, people with irritable bowel syndrome feel better, possibly because this mindful activity in the [present moment](#) keeps the brain from going back to old fears or worries."

**More information:** Bruce D. Naliboff et al, Mindfulness-based stress reduction improves irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) symptoms via specific aspects of mindfulness, *Neurogastroenterology & Motility* (2020). [DOI: 10.1111/nmo.13828](https://doi.org/10.1111/nmo.13828)

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