



**BOOK REVIEW:**  
**IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME: THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE**  
Sarah Dawson

The cover is eye catching enough to make the potential reader want to investigate further. It is clearly printed on good quality paper. The author identifies herself as a sufferer, which inspires confidence.

The introduction clearly and concisely sets out what the book aims to do, i.e. to find simple solutions to IBS 'taking into account lifestyle, occupation and personality'

There is a chapter on the causes of IBS, one which describes, in simple terms, the process of digestion, and one which identifies the people most likely to suffer, briefly mentioning the research available.

Chapter 4 suggests possible causes, e. g. certain foods and individuals' differing reactions. The role of antibiotics is mentioned, as well stress/trauma, and under 'Action points', how to begin to identify triggers.

There is a chapter which outlines the common symptoms and one on diagnosis, which describes the tests available. There is also one devoted to women and the role of hormones on IBS, and ways of managing this situation.

We then move on to treatment, with information about which foods could be responsible, what medication is available, both prescribed and over-the-counter. Here we have a brief description of several complementary therapies, including reflexology, and the reader is directed to the AoR website for more information.

The chapter on food and nutrition expands on the workings of the digestive system, with suggestions as to how and when to eat for maximum advantage. A few recipes are included. The 21<sup>st</sup> century lifestyle is also cited as a possible factor.

Summing up includes suggestions about how to live and cope with IBS in various situations. Some calming, relaxing and visualization techniques are included here.

The conclusion mentions clinical trials, as well as the possible role of mercury amalgam fillings. There are a couple of case studies, one of which mentions

reflexology again, and some FAQ's. There is a help list at the end, with contact details of a number of organizations.

For a new sufferer, I would definitely recommend this book. A seasoned and widely read sufferer might not learn anything new. On the other hand, it is concise, which I like and clearly laid out for quick reference. If I was having a book clear out, this is one I would hang on to.

Published by Need2know (Aug 2009)

ISBN-10: 1861440731

ISBN-13: 978-1861440730

Available from most major book stores.