IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME (IBS)

- **IBS** is when a person's colon does not work properly, so food moves too slowly or too quickly through the colon. It can cause many uncomfortable symptoms, but many of them can be relieved or reduced with diet or lifestyle changes.

- **What are the symptoms of IBS?**
  - Gas or bloating
  - Belly pain or cramps, especially right before a bowel movement
  - Chronic diarrhea, constipation, or alternating between the two
  - Mucus in the stool
  - Feeling like you need to pass stool right after you just finished

- **Possible triggers:**
  - Dairy products
  - Alcohol
  - Artificial sweeteners
  - Fried or high fat foods
  - Stress
  - Menstrual cycle
  - Beans, cabbage, cauliflower, and broccoli
  - Caffeine (like in coffee, tea, or soda)
  - Chocolate

- **What can help me feel better?**
  - Keep a food journal to identify possible foods that trigger your symptoms
  - Drink lots of fluids, especially water
  - SLOWLY increase the fiber in your diet:
    - Fruits: apples, peaches, plums, dates, grapes, raisins
    - Vegetables: carrots, peas, raw greens, etc.
    - Whole Grains & Beans: oats, rye, barley, lentils, beans
    - Nuts & Seeds: almonds, walnuts, pecans, flax seed, sunflower seeds, etc.
  - Eat smaller meals
  - Exercise regularly
  - Massage, deep breathing, yoga, and other relaxation techniques can help
  - Try to eat on a regular schedule
  - Quit smoking

- **Are there medications to treat IBS?**
  - Yes. Your doctor may be able to prescribe medications to help your symptoms if diet and lifestyle changes aren’t enough.