

## Help! I'm Feeling Irritable... *By Mindy Tatera, MD*

If you suffer from Irritable Bowel Syndrome, or "IBS", it can make you feel irritable indeed. IBS is the most commonly diagnosed gastrointestinal condition, affecting an estimated 10-20% of the general population. Approximately 50% of cases are diagnosed prior to age 35 and twice as many women as men are affected.

Symptoms may include abdominal pain, cramping, bloating, diarrhea and constipation. IBS is a "functional" disorder, which means that it does not cause inflammation or damage to the colon. There is no clear-cut cause for IBS and the chronic nature of the condition and challenge of controlling symptoms can be frustrating.

There is not a specific test to diagnose IBS. The diagnosis is based on symptoms and exclusion of other diseases that may cause similar symptoms. In many cases, symptoms can be

managed by diet, lifestyle changes and stress reduction. Keeping a food journal can be helpful to identify trigger foods.

Since many people with IBS are lactose intolerant, consider giving up milk, ice cream and other lactose-containing foods for 2 weeks. Increasing dietary fiber, either by adding certain foods or taking fiber supplements, may alleviate symptoms. Fiber supplements should be started at low dose and increased slowly over several weeks to reduce problems with bloating/gas.

Stress and anxiety tend to worsen symptoms. Therefore, stress-reduction techniques (eg. exercise, meditation, yoga, massage), counseling and anti-depressant medications may be helpful. It is important to work closely with your physician to determine the right treatment plan for you.

### Clinics Help Hemorrhoid Sufferers

Thunderbird Internal Medicine now offers regular Hemorrhoid Clinics led by colon-rectal specialists Ariel Forstner-Barthell, MD and Elizabeth McConnell, MD at the following locations:

- **5620 W. Thunderbird Road, #G-2, Glendale 85306**  
First Wednesday of each month from 12 – 3 pm  
Last Wednesday of each month from 1 – 4:30 p.m.
- **9150 W. Indian School Road, #118, Phoenix 85037**  
Third Wednesday of each month from 3 – 5 pm

A common health concern, hemorrhoids occur when blood vessels inside the anal canal swell causing pain and sometimes bleeding. While many can be treated through dietary changes and medication, some require laser treatment or surgery. Diagnosis and treatment is usually completed during the same visit.

**To schedule, call 602-938-6960.**

### Time for Your Flu Shot!

You can get the 2011-2012 flu shot at any of our locations by walking in weekdays between 10 am and 4 pm. Existing patients can have the shot billed to their insurance company or Medicare. The cash price is \$47. The Centers for Disease Control recommends receiving the vaccine as soon as it becomes available. The shot is an inactivated vaccine (contains viral particles that are not alive) and was created to counter flu strains most likely to spread during the coming flu season.



**Thunderbird Internal Medicine – Glendale**  
5620 W. Thunderbird Rd #C-1, #F-1 & #G-2  
Glendale, Arizona 85306

**Thunderbird Internal Medicine - Estrella**  
9150 W. Indian School Rd #118  
Phoenix, Arizona 85037