

How might my gut problem be affecting me?

Functional gastrointestinal (GI) problems, including Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) and autonomic dysfunction in Inflammatory Bowel Disease, can greatly affect your life.

This includes your ability to go to work & spend time with friends and family and eat your favorite foods. It can also mean you feel depressed and anxious. Gut problems can be embarrassing to discuss with others and can often leave the affected person feeling alone and isolated.

Is stress or anxiety causing my gut problems?

The cause of Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) and functional gut problems are unknown, although a number of possibilities have been suggested, including diet or bacterial infection. While not causing the problem, stress and anxiety can greatly worsen the frequency and severity of the symptoms, and the way a person copes with the pain and symptoms. Studies also suggest anxiety may actually maintain the gut problems. Even if you don't feel stressed / anxious or believe in hypnotherapy, it can still be very effective.

How does the mind affect the gut?

There are strong connections in the nervous system between the brain and the gastrointestinal system (Brain-Gut Axis). Both our gut and our brain originate early in embryo from the same clump of tissue, which divides during foetal development. Later the brain and gut systems connect via a major nerve (called the Vagus nerve). Although both systems are separate, they are influenced by the same bodily chemicals, or neurotransmitters. The gut system sends and receives signals from the brain, records experiences and responds to emotions. The brain signals to the gut system via nerves that carry messages and control the pattern of activity in the gut. In functional bowel disorders, there may be a disruption in this communication between the two systems resulting in altered functioning and hypersensitivity.

Why hypnotherapy for gut related problems?

As there is no structural damage to the bowel, functional bowel problems like IBS can be influenced by the mind through the brain gut interaction. Hypnotherapy works by helping individuals learn mental skills and techniques to develop control over the physiological mechanisms influencing the gut - these mechanisms are not normally under conscious control. These may produce changes that occur in the gut itself. Alternatively, as in the case of pain, hypnotherapy may also retrain the brain to reinterpret or ignore the incoming sensory signals. Gut Focused Hypnotherapy was developed by a Professor of Gastroenterology Prof Peter Whorwell approximately 25 years ago in the United Kingdom. Since that time, it has been successfully used to treat functional bowel disorders including IBS.

In fact, clinical practice along with multiple research studies using gut directed hypnotherapy have demonstrated a reduction in symptom severity or a total removal of symptoms, along with improved emotional wellbeing, coping, and quality of life.

Summary of Benefits:

- ✓ Research has found success rates ranging from approximately 70-80%
- ✓ Studies have shown improvement in all major symptoms, including abdominal pain (visceral hypersensitivity), diarrhoea/constipation (altered gut motility), reflux, bloating and distension.
- ✓ Positive treatment outcomes have been shown to be sustained 5 years post finishing treatment
- ✓ Improvement in quality of life and general well-being, including a reduction in anxiety and depression.

I've heard some strange things about hypnosis ...

There are a number of common myths about hypnosis, resulting from stage and television entertainers. For example, there is the belief that you might lose control while hypnotised. With stage hypnosis, the performer relies heavily on the person's willingness to act in amusing ways to entertain the crowds. It is not possible to hypnotise anyone against their will. With hypnotherapy, you are totally aware of what is being said and at no time do you lose control. Gut Directed Hypnotherapy is about helping you get back IN CONTROL. We offer a professional environment, where you can feel safe and at ease.

What should I expect during Hypnosis?

Hypnotherapy is quite simple, all that is required is to sit down and listen to the therapist. Clients report feeling comfortable and relaxed and being aware of what is being said to them the entire time. Psychological counselling and treatments are also an important component of the sessions in order to maximise a positive outcome.

How many sessions will I require?

In order to achieve improvement in symptoms or symptom resolution, normally 6 sessions are recommended. We cannot predict when a person will start to improve. Some individuals experience relief or resolution of symptoms earlier than others. The number of sessions will depend on when improvements are made, and any remaining sessions can be cancelled if required.

Will it help with other gastro-intestinal conditions?

We utilise Hypnotherapy to also treat upper gastrointestinal symptoms including Dysphagia (difficulty swallowing) Globus (lump in throat feeling), Reflux, Heart burn, Non-cardiac chest pain, Rumination, Cyclic/Vomiting, and Gastroparesis. Hypnotherapy has also been demonstrated to be effective as an adjunct/complimentary therapy in Inflammatory Bowel Disease (Crohns and Ulcerative Colitis).

What if I don't want to do hypnotherapy?

That's fine. Hypnotherapy is one psychological treatment for IBS or functional gut problems. At the Gut Centre we also utilise Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) or mindfulness based therapy that have been shown in multiple studies to be effective in managing gut symptoms and the psychological distress.

Who is The Gut Centre and how do you differ from other services?

We are specialist gastrointestinal psychologists/hypnotherapists. We use the latest, most evidence based hypnotherapy and psychological treatments shown to be beneficial to those suffering from IBS, IBD and other functional gut problems. All of our specialists offer many years of experience and a wealth of Knowledge. At The Gut Centre we also provide a very warm, caring and professional service.