

Listen to your gut

Gut-directed hypnotherapy is the latest, proven way to reduce IBS



Those who suffer from irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) could find much-needed relief through gut-directed hypnotherapy. This new treatment reduces symptoms by 72 per cent, as discovered in a clinical study at Monash University led by Dr Simone Peters, a clinical gut-directed hypnotherapist and psychophysiologist at Mind + Gut Clinic.

WHAT IS IT?

"Gut-directed hypnotherapy is a type of hypnotherapy

targeted to improving symptoms of disorders of the gastrointestinal tract," Dr Peters explains. "It's most frequently used in people with IBS."

She says that when the treatment is provided by a trained practitioner, there are no known side effects and there is no risk of affecting your nutrient intake.

This approach is proven to be as effective as adopting a low FODMAP diet (which is often used to reduce IBS symptoms, and requires

removing specific foods from a person's diet). In Dr Peters' study, there was a 72 per cent reduction in gut symptoms in people who received gut-directed hypnotherapy and a 71 per cent reduction in gut symptoms in people who received the low FODMAP diet.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

"The mind and the gut are directly connected: one cannot function without the other,"

Dr Peters notes. "Gut-directed hypnotherapy aims to enhance mind-gut communication."

She explains that psychological factors like stress, anxiety and depression impact the gut. Abnormalities in the gut can also cause IBS symptoms – this can include motility (the speed at which the contents move through your gut) and sensitivity (how the sensitive the nerves are that line the gut).

During a gut-directed hypnotherapy session, "the person is guided by the

Abdominal pain is one of IBS' crippling symptoms.

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in abdominal pain, bloating, wind and improvements in stool consistency," says Dr Peters. "Hypnotherapy has also been shown to reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression in people with IBS and improve people's quality of life."

Her clinical study on the effectiveness of the treatment found that 74 per cent of participants had long-term reduction of symptoms. The longest post-treatment study found benefits lasted five years.

WHAT ABOUT OTHER CONDITIONS?

"It is predominantly used to treat IBS, as this is where the majority of research has been conducted," says Dr Peters. "That said, we are using it quite frequently in people who have functional gut symptoms but don't meet specific criteria for IBS, and those who have Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis and co-existing symptoms."

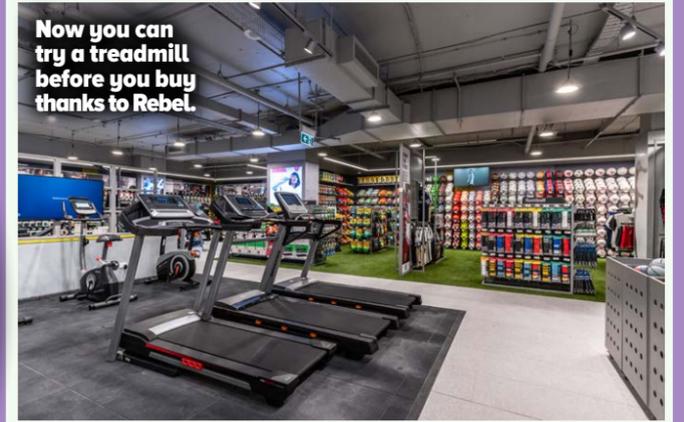
She adds that there's data to suggest that it is useful for people with chronic pain conditions, however it's not as widely studied at this point.

hypnotherapist into a light and relaxed daydreaming state," says Dr Peters. "Suggestions for the control and normalisation of gut function are made to the sub-conscious mind. This type of therapy differs to other forms of psychological treatment, where the therapy is done with the person in a conscious state."

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS?

"The lasting benefits of this treatment include reductions

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