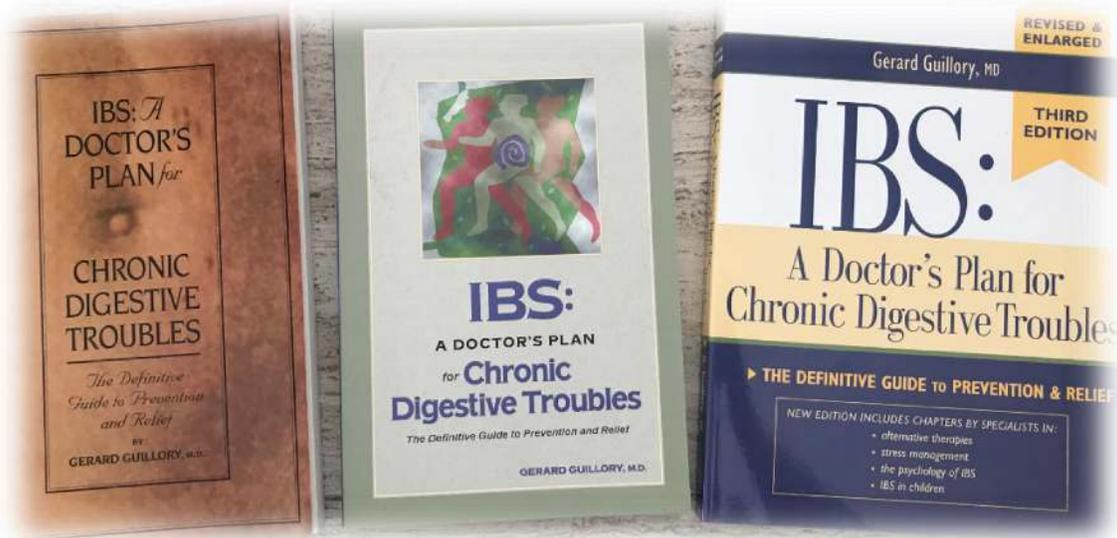


What is Leaky Gut?



In 1989, I wrote one of the first books ever on Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS). My introduction to [“leaky gut”](#) was through my study of patients with IBS. I became interested in IBS many years ago, wrote a book about IBS in 1989, and published 3 updated editions since then. The most recent book, published in 2001, is titled “IBS: A Doctor’s Plan for Chronic Digestive Troubles.” One of the key points that I discovered over my years of treating patients with IBS is [that “leaky gut syndrome”](#) – a diagnosis I was never taught in medical school – almost always contributes to their symptoms.

The Care Group’s website is now a hub for leaky gut information. To learn more, visit:
www.thecaregrouppc.com/leaky-gut-syndrome/

To understand leaky gut, we first need to be clear about the normal physiology of the intestine. The small intestinal lining (also called the mucosa) creates the largest interface between the outside world and our internal bodies. It is folded into millions of fingerlike projections called villi and microvilli which, if unfolded, would equal the surface area of a tennis court. Picture it like a shag carpet with multiple folds. The villi act like an internal root system. In much the same way the roots of a plant absorb nutrients from the soil, the villi absorb digested food or nutrients from the small intestine.

Under healthy circumstances, the small intestinal lining creates a boundary that allows nutrients from our food to be absorbed into the bloodstream, while at the same time blocking the absorption of undigested bacteria, yeast, parasites, and

toxins. Regulating what can or cannot be absorbed is a critical role of the cells lining the intestinal wall. In a healthy intestine, the adjoining cells form tight, impermeable junctions. These tight junctions will intermittently open, allowing the passage of nutrients into the bloodstream.

Another way to think of the intestinal lining is like a cheesecloth. If you were to pulse some food in a blender and pour it through the cloth, the liquid would pass through, and the larger food chunks would remain on the other side. If the cheesecloth lining were to become damaged, larger particles from the small intestine would seep into the bloodstream. These particles could then activate the immune system and create problems throughout the body. The immune system actually reacts as soon as particles pass through the intestinal lining into the body. This is because 80% of the body's white blood cells reside in lymphatic tissue just under the intestinal villi. These white blood cells act as border guards and begin attacking any undigested food particles, bacterial toxins, or germs as they pass through the cheesecloth—as if they were foreign invaders. As the fight ensues, more collateral damage to the cheesecloth can occur as the war is being waged. This sets up a perpetual cycle of inflammation leading to more inflammation and damage.

Although leaky gut syndrome is often considered a “quack” diagnosis by mainstream physicians it is becoming more accepted. More than 10,000 research papers have been written about intestinal permeability or leaky gut, but it still remains somewhat of a medical mystery.

Leaky Gut Symptoms

Leaky gut can produce symptoms of IBS, such as abdominal pain, gas, bloating, or altered bowel habits. However, it's important to note that about 30% of individuals with leaky gut have no digestive symptoms at all. Other conditions that can result from a leaky gut occur because of the systemic inflammation associated with this syndrome. Leaky gut can contribute to allergic conditions, such as food allergies, hayfever, and asthma. It can contribute to [autoimmune diseases](#), such as celiac disease, [Hashimoto's thyroiditis](#), lupus, rheumatoid arthritis, and psoriasis. It can contribute to skin disorders, such as acne, rosacea and eczema. It can contribute to chronic fatigue syndrome and even mood disorders, such as anxiety, depression and ADD. Leaky gut is strongly associated with a condition called non-alcoholic fatty liver disease. If you suffer from any of these symptoms or conditions, leaky gut may be the root cause of your problem.

For additional information, check out [this YouTube video](#) where Dr. Guillory explains Leaky Gut in greater detail.