Stress at Work Can Take a Toll on Those With IBS

Elsa's switch to the night shift at her hectic job aggravated her gastrointestinal symptoms, which became progressively worse.

August 23, 2021 By Kate Ferguson

Elsa is a 35-year-old woman with a one-year history of constipation accompanied by abdominal pain and bloating. She experiences a bowel movement every three to four days and reports feeling as if she doesn't completely evacuate her bowels. She strains to pass her feces, and her stools look like pebbles. Once she's completed a bowel movement, though, she experiences relief from the bloating and pain in her stomach.

Grab and go meals can make IBS symptoms worse.Istock

Elsa's dietary habits are poor. Her meals are not well-balanced, and she eats at irregular times. Her gastrointestinal problems began shortly after she started working the overnight shift at an extremely stressful job. She also developed sleep issues. Prior to this switch in her schedule, she exercised regularly.

In addition, Elsa has become extremely self-conscious about her appearance. Her clothing doesn't fit well because of the bloating, and she resents that she must depend on medications to go to the bathroom.

A change from daytime to nighttime work can wreak havoc on people with IBS.Istock

Doctors recommended that Elsa create an eating schedule that allows her to enjoy well-balanced meals, drink more fluids and resume an exercise regimen.

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