



SMALL INTESTINAL BACTERIAL OVERGROWTH (SIBO)

Small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO) is a condition due to excessive colonization of the small intestine by bacteria. It may be associated with mucosal inflammation and nutrient malabsorption. Affected patients may be asymptomatic or have one or more symptoms including bloating, abdominal discomfort, diarrhea, dyspepsia, and, in severe cases, weight loss.

- Treatment of SIBO consists of treatment of the underlying disease, dietary manipulation, and antibiotic therapy.
- SIBO due to sluggish motility should be treated with medications to enhance motility to eliminate and prevent relapse of SIBO. Drugs that reduce motility (narcotics, benzodiazepines, ant motility agents) should be discontinued.
As prolonged or excessive acid suppression may be a contributing factor for the development of symptoms of SIBO, the use of acid-suppressive medication should be minimized. Lifestyle measures should be considered for treatment of gastroesophageal reflux disease, and acid-suppressive medication should be prescribed at the lowest possible dose for the condition being treated and for the shortest duration.
- A diet consisting of high fat, low carbohydrate and low fiber may reduce symptoms. As lactase deficiency develops in many adult patients with SIBO, lactose-containing foods should be avoided.
Additional nutritional support and correction of micronutrient deficiency may be required in patients with significant malabsorption.
- We suggest antibiotic treatment for SIBO with rifaximin (Xifaxan). However, a major limitation to the use of rifaximin is the high cost. Adequate antimicrobial coverage can also be achieved with other antibiotic combinations.
- Recurrence is common after treatment. Patient with recurrent symptoms may require repeated courses of therapy, and others need treatment on a regular basis (such as the first 5 to 10 days out of every month or every other week). In the latter patients, rotating antibiotics regimens may help to prevent the development of resistance.