

## New Digital CBT for IBS Patient Information

### **Why is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) relevant for me if I have IBS?**

IBS symptoms are real and can be very distressing. IBS affects about 1-in-15 people in the UK<sup>1</sup> so you are not alone. You may have found that stress can make your IBS symptoms worse, or IBS symptoms themselves can cause you stress. But why is this?

Extensive research suggests that the brain and gut are connected<sup>2</sup> – in fact, they are sending signals to one another all the time! Evidence shows that IBS is caused by your brain and your digestive system not communicating well with each other. This doesn't mean your physical symptoms aren't real or that they are "all in your head". What it means is that we can use this 'brain-gut' connection to treat IBS. Treatment with medicines is ineffective for many people with IBS but It's been scientifically proven that CBT can provide significant and long-lasting relief of symptoms, as well as reduction in anxiety and depression.



<sup>1</sup>Oka, P., Parr, H., Barberio, B., Black, C.J., Savarino, E.V., Ford A.C. Global prevalence of irritable bowel syndrome according to Rome III or IV criteria: a systematic review and meta-analysis. *Lancet Gastroenterol Hepatol.* 2020 Oct;5(10):908-917.

<sup>2</sup>Malagelada, J.R. The Brain-Gut Team. *Dig Dis.* 2020;38(4):293-298.

## What is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)?

CBT is simpler than it sounds and it's easy to do. You may have heard of it being used for anxiety or depression but you may not know CBT can be used to treat lots of conditions successfully, including IBS. Treatment focuses on learning new skills so you can manage your IBS symptoms better. Through the process of understanding more about how your body works and how your thoughts and behaviours can impact on your IBS symptoms, you can achieve meaningful and long-lasting improvements.

This psychology-based approach helps to reduce the severity of your IBS symptoms by targeting the brain-gut interaction. However, people may not have the time or desire to spend hours discussing gut problems with a psychological therapist. That's where digital CBT can help you.

## What is digital CBT for IBS?

It's a personalised treatment designed to allow you to get the benefits from CBT without inconvenience, and it's specially targeted for IBS. It will take you 8 to 12 weeks to complete this programme, but you can do all of it from home on your computer at your own pace – in around just 10 minutes a day! The positive effects last for much longer.

This programme is supported by science: in a large clinical trial, 3 out of 4 participants reported significant symptom relief<sup>3</sup>. Some benefits were reported even after one year<sup>4</sup> (maybe longer – we haven't proven that yet, scientifically).



<sup>3</sup>Everitt, H. A., Landau, S., O'Reilly, G., Sibelli, A., Hughes, S., Windgassen, S., ... & Goldsmith, K. (2019). Assessing telephone-delivered cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) and web-delivered CBT versus treatment as usual in irritable bowel syndrome (ACTIB): a multicentre randomised trial. *Gut*, 68:1613-1623.

<sup>4</sup>Everitt, H. A., Landau, S., O'Reilly, G., Sibelli, A., Hughes, S., Windgassen, S., ... &, Moss-Morris, R. (2019). Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Irritable Bowel Syndrome: 24-month Follow-Up of Participants in the ACTIB Randomised Trial. *Lancet Gastroenterol Hepatol*, 4(11):863-872.

## **What's involved?**

You simply log into a website, answer some questions, and complete some activities in your own time over a period of 8 to 12 weeks. You'll be working towards specific goals that are important to you.

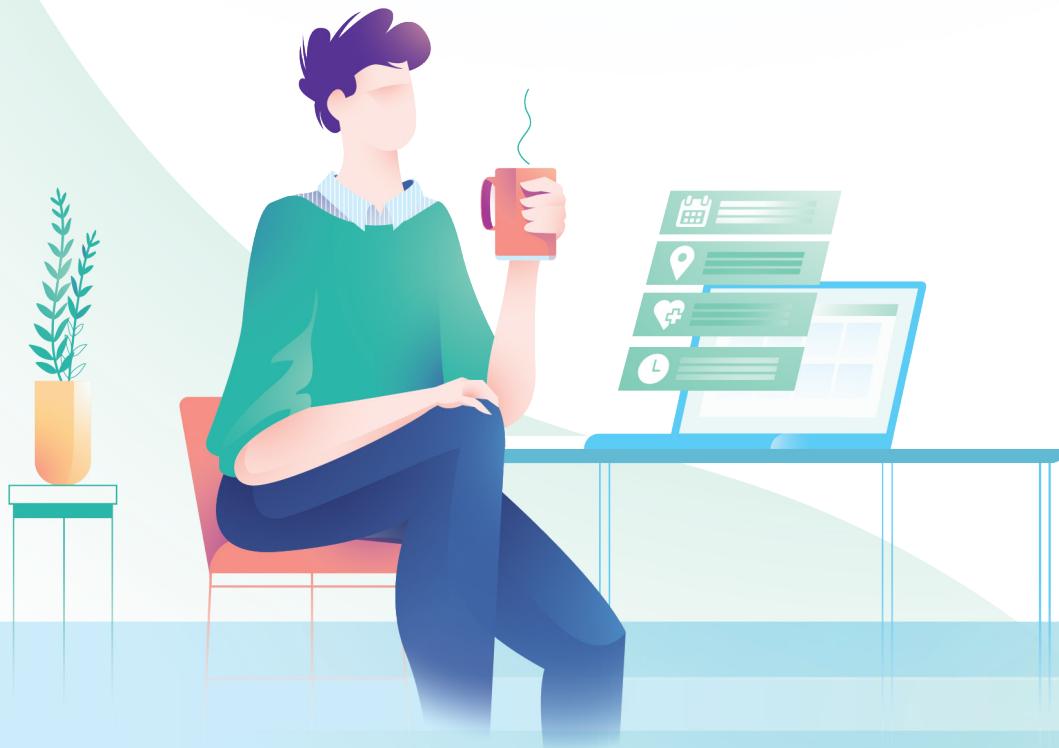
An NHS therapist will contact you and may want to undertake a short telephone conversation every few weeks to understand how you're getting on. In the meantime, you can contact the therapist via the website if you wish. That's it. You don't need to leave your home and you can complete the course whenever convenient to you.

## **Will it cost me anything?**

No! This treatment is provided by the NHS and will not cost you any money at any time, now or in the future.

## **How do I know this treatment can really help me?**

The treatment has been scientifically proven to help alleviate the severity of IBS symptoms in a large clinical trial<sup>2</sup> and is recommended for evaluation by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence<sup>5</sup>: the government body which approves all medicines and health treatments for use in the UK. We can't guarantee it will work for you, but it made a significant difference in IBS symptoms for three quarters of IBS patients who took part in the trial.



## **What happens to my data? I'm nervous about the internet**

Your data will not be used for any purpose other than for your own treatment and to improve the treatment of others by the analysis of anonymous information from many people. The treatment is provided by a company called Mahana Therapeutics, who are fully bound by NHS Terms and Conditions, and Data Protection requirements. Your data is secure, like your NHS medical records, and will not be used for sales or marketing purposes. It will not be passed on.

## **What if I want to stop being involved?**

If you feel that the therapy is not working for you, or you simply wish to stop, you can just stop using the website, preferably discussing this decision with your NHS therapist in advance.

## **OK, so what do I need to do and what happens next?**

If you are interested in trying this online therapy then you can self-refer via our website: [talkchangesforhealth.org.uk](http://talkchangesforhealth.org.uk) – it's simple and only takes 5 minutes!



***"The beauty of this programme is it can be done at your own pace, any time, and anywhere.***

***"It is the least invasive yet most effective treatment I have ever had – and the only one that has worked. I'd recommend anyone to try this life changing treatment."***

- Laura Day, Mahana IBS Digital CBT Clinical Trial participant, UK