

Inflammatory Bowel Disease in Adults

What is Inflammatory Bowel Disease?

Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) includes both Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

- Crohn's disease can affect the entire digestive tract, from the mouth to the anus.
- Ulcerative colitis affects the large intestine and the rectum.

You absorb most of the nutrients from your food in the small intestine. Some nutrients are absorbed in the large intestine. If you have Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis, you may not absorb iron, folic acid, and calcium well.

Both Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis have two stages:

Stage 1: When you feel well and do not have symptoms.

Stage 2: When you have flare-ups and feel unwell. You may have symptoms of nausea, loss of appetite, diarrhea and/or intestinal pain.

When you feel well, it is important to eat healthy so you are well nourished. When you feel unwell, you can change your diet to help manage your symptoms.



Steps you can take

When You Feel Well

- Follow [Canada's Food Guide](#) to get the needed nutrients. These nutrients will help you to get and stay healthy. They will also help you get back any weight that you may have lost.
 - Eat 7-10 servings of vegetables and fruit daily.

- Eat 6-8 servings of grain products daily. Choose whole grain products for at least half. Examples include:
 - barley
 - oatmeal
 - whole grain breads and cereals
 - breads and cereals that have added bran or psyllium
- Eat 2-3 servings of milk and alternatives daily.
- Eat 2-3 servings of meat and alternatives daily.
- Include 30-45 mL (2 to 3 Tbsp) of unsaturated fat daily (e.g. canola, olive or soybean oils). These fats are found in some salad dressings, non-hydrogenated margarines, mayonnaise and some cooking oils.
- Drink plenty of fluids. Fibre and water work together and help keep bowel movements regular.
- At this time the research does not support taking omega-3 fatty acids or probiotics (healthy bacteria) to help treat IBD or prevent flare-ups.

When You Feel Unwell

When you have a flare-up it may be difficult to eat enough food to get the energy (calories) and nutrients you need. You will need to make changes in your diet to manage your symptoms. In severe cases, medication and/or surgery may be options. Consult your doctor if you continue to have diarrhea, vomiting, pain or uncontrolled weight loss.

During a Flare-up: Continue to eat a healthy diet.

- Follow [Canada's Food Guide](#)
- Include high fibre foods if you can handle them. Limit high fibre foods only if your doctor has told you to avoid them.
- You may want to try diets or foods that claim to help reduce your symptoms. You may even want to stop eating to give your digestive track a rest. Before you do:

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- Speak with your doctor or dietitian before making dietary changes.
 - Avoid skipping meals.
 - Watch for foods in your diet that trigger a flare-up. You are the best judge of what foods you can tolerate.

Prevent weight loss.

- Eat enough calories every day. If you feel full, try smaller meals during the day.
- Smoothies, milkshakes or commercial drinks such as Ensure® or Boost® are easy ways to get calories.
- If you are losing weight, slowly increase healthy fats in your diet. Healthy fats include non-hydrogenated margarine, vegetable oils and mayonnaise.

Include protein in your diet daily.

- Protein is important to help build, maintain and repair cells and tissues in your body.
- Protein rich foods include:
 - meat
 - poultry
 - fish
 - eggs
 - milk and alternatives
 - soy, tofu, textured-modified protein
 - seeds and nuts, including nut butters.

Prevent anemia and osteoporosis.

- You may develop anemia and/or osteoporosis when you do not absorb enough iron, folic acid and/or calcium from the food you eat. Taking corticosteroids (medication) can affect calcium absorption.

- Include iron and folic acid-rich foods in your diet to prevent anemia. Consume vitamin D- and calcium-rich foods to prevent osteoporosis. Your doctor or dietitian can tell you if a vitamin and/or mineral supplement is needed.

<i>Vitamin/Mineral</i>	<i>Food Sources</i>
Iron	Meat, poultry, iron fortified cereals, dark green leafy vegetables and legumes*
Folic Acid	Dark green vegetables; fortified pasta, noodles and flour; and legumes*
Vitamin D	Milk and fortified milk alternatives, fortified soy beverages, fish and cod liver oil
Calcium	Almonds, dark green vegetables and legumes*

*Legumes are high in protein, but can cause gas.

General Tips for Managing Symptoms During a Flare-up

Gas and Bloating

- Eat slowly and chew your food well.
- Avoid swallowing extra air. This can happen:
 - when you eat too quickly
 - drink through a straw
 - consume carbonated beverages
 - drink hot beverages (for some people)
- Find out which foods make you more 'gassy'. Eat them in smaller amounts and/or less often.

Diarrhea

- Eat small meals and snacks during the day.

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- Drink plenty of fluids to replace fluids lost. Choose:
 - water
 - weak tea
 - broth
 - diluted 100% juice
 - sports drinks with sodium and potassium.
 - Avoid sugary drinks such as soda pop, fruit drinks and chocolate milk.
 - Alcohol and caffeine can stimulate your digestive tract and may make diarrhea worse.
 - Avoid or limit alcohol intake to no more than two drinks daily. Women should have no more than nine drinks a week. Men should have no more than 14 drinks a week. One drink is one of the following:
 - 12 oz (375 mL) bottle of beer
 - 5 oz (150 mL) of wine
 - 1.5 oz (45 mL) of spirits
 - 3 oz (85 mL) serving of fortified wine, such as sherry or port.
 - Limit caffeine intake to 400 mg of caffeine daily. This amount is equal to three cups of coffee. Liquids and foods containing caffeine include:
 - coffee and tea
 - cola beverages
 - chocolate
 - Refer to Additional Resources for more information on caffeine.
 - Soluble fibre may help to prevent or manage diarrhea. It helps thicken watery stools. Add fibre gradually to your meals to avoid gas, bloating and diarrhea. Soluble fibre is found in:
 - vegetables

- legumes
- grains such as barley, oat bran and psyllium.

Special Considerations

Lactose Intolerance

Having Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis does not increase your risk of lactose intolerance. However, the symptoms of lactose intolerance (nausea, cramps, diarrhea, bloating and gas) can be similar to the symptoms of an IBD flare-up. If you reduce the lactose in your diet by limiting milk during a flare-up, add the milk back into your diet if your symptoms do not improve. If you have lactose intolerance, refer to Additional Resources below.

If you are Pregnant or Plan to Become Pregnant

Speak with your doctor or dietitian if you are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. A dietitian can provide information on the amount of weight you need to gain and how to get the nutrients you need to help you have a healthy baby. For more information, refer to Additional Resources below.

Other Healthy Lifestyle Tips:

- Manage stress. Talk to your doctor if you have difficulty with stress in your life.
- Exercise regularly. Follow the [Physical Activity Guidelines](#). Adults should get at least 150 minutes of moderate physical activity like brisk walking, biking and swimming weekly.
- Do not smoke.
- Get enough sleep daily so you feel rested.



Additional Resources

- It's Your Health - Caffeine. Available at: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/food-aliment/caffeine-eng.php>

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This information is not meant to replace advice from your medical doctor or individual counseling with a registered dietitian. It is intended for educational and informational purposes only.

- Mayoclinic.com. Crohn's disease lifestyle and home remedies. Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research. Available from: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/crohns-disease/DS00104/DSECTION=lifestyle-and-home-remedies>
- Healthy Pregnancy. Available at: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/preg-gros/index-eng.php>

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Notes

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