

About NUTRITION IN INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE (IBD)



Understanding Nutrition in IBD: Information for Patients & Caregivers from the American College of Gastroenterology

WHAT IS IBD?

Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) is a long-term (chronic) inflammation of tissues in your digestive tract which includes the conditions ulcerative colitis (UC) and Crohn's disease (CD).

DIET AND NUTRITION CAN AFFECT HOW PEOPLE WITH IBD FEEL. Certain foods ("trigger foods") may make you feel worse, and avoiding those may help to manage your symptoms. Meeting your nutritional needs is very important, and you may need to talk with your doctor or a dietitian to make sure that your body is getting the nutrients it needs to work well.

There is no "one-size-fits-all" diet that works for everyone with IBD!

Some IBD patients can tolerate certain foods, while others cannot. IBD is an autoimmune condition and there is no single diet or medication that can help IBD completely. Some diets may help you manage your condition, although many people combine diet and medication to find what works best for them. Talk to your doctor about IBD and nutrition, and do not begin any exclusion diets without talking to your doctor or dietitian first.

SOME DIET OPTIONS FOR PATIENTS WITH IBD

Mediterranean Diet

- Whole grains, fruits, and vegetables

**Note: Patients with narrowing in their intestines (strictures) may need to avoid high-fiber foods*

- Fats from fish, olive oil, nuts, and seeds
- Protein from low-fat dairy, poultry, fish, shellfish, or legumes (beans, peanuts, and peas)
- Less red meat, especially for patients with UC
- Avoid ultra-processed foods with high sugar and salt (junk foods)

Specific Carbohydrate Diet (SCD)

- Eliminates sugars, starches, and grains
- Shown to decrease IBD symptoms, and may decrease inflammation

Crohn's Disease Exclusion Diet

- Eliminates sugars, red meat, dairy, and wheat
- May help control mild Crohn's disease for short periods of time
- Important to regularly test for low protein, vitamin D, vitamin B12, folate, and iron
- A therapy called "exclusive enteral nutrition" may be helpful in CD in both children and adults.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR DOCTOR

- Are any of my nutritional levels low? Which ones, and what tests are needed?
- Do I need to take any vitamins/minerals to help?
- Is it safe to drink alcoholic beverages or sugary drinks (soda, energy drinks, or electrolyte drinks)?
- Should I get help from a registered dietitian?

ACG Patient Information:

gi.org/topics/inflammatory-bowel-disease

Find a Gastroenterologist:

gi.org/patients/find-a-gastroenterologist