

Crohn's Disease

Patient education

What is Crohn's disease?

Crohn's disease is an inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) that affects the gastrointestinal (GI) tract. Crohn's disease causes irritation and inflammation of the distal part of the small intestine and anywhere in the large intestine, but it can affect any parts of the GI tract, including the stomach and the anus. Crohn's disease is one of several illnesses known as inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). Crohn's disease can begin slowly and worsen over time.

What causes Crohn's disease?

The cause of this condition is unknown. It could involve a reaction in which your body's immune system attacks healthy cells and tissues. Bacteria, genes and your surroundings can trigger the onset of Crohn's disease.

What increases the risks?

- Having a family member with Crohn's disease, another inflammatory bowel disease, or an autoimmune condition
- Using nicotine or tobacco products
- You are under 30 years old
- You have ancestors from Eastern Europe

What are the possible symptoms of Crohn's disease?

Symptoms that involve the GI tract

- Diarrhea
- Abdominal pain or cramping
- Watery or bloody stools
- Constipation
- Bleeding in the rectum
- Rectal discomfort

Other Symptoms

- Inexplicable weight loss
- Fatigue
- Fever
- Nausea
- Loss of appetite
- Joint discomfort
- Mouth sores

How to treat Crohn's disease:

Medicines to help the following:

- Reduce inflammation

- Control immune system
- Fight infections
- Control pain

Surgery is required if:

- Medicines do not work
- You develop complications
- Intestines have been damaged

If you are currently experiencing a flare up of Crohn's disease:

- Try to rest your bowel by eating bland food
- Keep yourself hydrated by drinking lots of clear fluids

If you have been diagnosed with Crohn's disease, please contact your doctor or health care provider immediately if you are experiencing any of the following:

- You have diarrhea, abdominal cramps, and other GI issues that are constant
- Your symptoms do not improve
- You are still losing weight
- Your skin develops a rash or sores
- You develop vision problems
- You have a fever
- Your symptoms worsen
- You begin to experience new symptoms

If you have been diagnosed with Crohn's disease, please get help immediately if you are experiencing any of the following:

- You are experiencing bloody diarrhea
- You have severe abdominal pain
- It is difficult to pass stool

Where can I get more information?

Crohn's and Colitis Canada

Website: <https://crohnsandcolitis.ca/>

Reference: Crohn's Disease. (2021, June 08). Elsevier Inc: ClinicalKey for Nursing.

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