

Living with IBD

What is IBD?

- **IBD** (which stands for **I**nflammatory **B**owel **D**isease) is a group of diseases that cause inflammation (swelling) in digestive tract. The digestive tract is made up of organs, such as the stomach and intestines, where food and liquids travel through and are digested.
- Inflammation from IBD can sometimes cause: pain, bleeding, diarrhea, fatigue (feeling very tired), and weight loss.
- Because IBD is a chronic (long-term) illness, many people with IBD may have flare-ups, or symptoms that return. IBD flare-ups can be managed and remission (where symptoms improve or go away) is possible.

Tips for managing an IBD flare-up:

- Drink plenty of water
- Talk with your doctor
- Eat 4-6 smaller meals instead of 3 bigger meals
- Keep a food diary
- Think about taking a multi vitamin
- Exercise
- Lower your stress



Eating during an IBD flare-up:

- At the start of a flare-up, try having clear liquids like tea or broth, Jello, popsicles, and clear juices for 1-2 days to give your gut time to rest.
- Fruits with less fiber, such as bananas, cantaloupe, and honeydew melon.
- Lean proteins, like poultry, fish, lean pork, tofu, and soy.
- Refined grains, like potato bread, sourdough, gluten-free bread, and oatmeal.
- Fully cooked veggies, like squash and potatoes—can try as a soup and puree too.
- Oral nutritional supplements like Ensure.

As you learn how to live with IBD and get your flare-ups under control, you can be a little more adventurous with your eating habits. Slowly add new things to your diet. Keep track of foods that make your symptoms better or worse.

Not every person with IBD will be the same when it comes to eating. Some foods may bother one person and not the other. Keep a food diary to help figure out which foods give you issues and which foods make you feel better.

Common foods to avoid during flare-ups:



Artificial sweeteners



*High fiber foods



Uncooked veggies
(like broccoli or cauliflower)



Caffeine



Dairy products



Spicy foods



High fat foods



Alcohol

Eating while in remission:



Plenty of protein
(lean meats, fish, eggs, tofu)



Fruits and
veggies



Foods with probiotics
(Kimchi, yogurt, sauerkraut)



*Foods with small amounts of fiber
(Oats, whole grains)



Anti-inflammatory foods
(turmeric, olive oil, fatty fish)



Calcium-rich foods
(collard greens, kefir)

***A note about fiber:** While fiber could make a flare up worse, in times of remission, small amounts of fiber can help with digestion.

Tips for preventing flare-ups:

1. Quit smoking. Studies show that smoking can make Crohn's Disease worse.
2. Take a probiotic supplement.
3. Avoid stress. Studies show that stress can make IBD symptoms worse, so learning to manage stress and practicing self-care is important.
4. Eat foods that make you feel good. Avoid foods that trigger flare-ups.
5. Develop a good sleep schedule.
6. Talk with your doctor about which pain medicines are best for you - not all are helpful for Irritable Bowel conditions!