

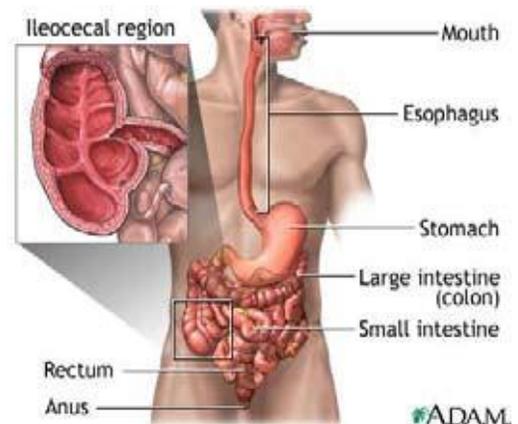
What is Crohn's Disease?

Crohn's is a type of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) that causes inflammation of the digestive system. This disease can affect any area from the mouth to the anus but often affects the lower portion of the small intestine called the ileocecal region. If the small intestine is inflamed, it makes it more difficult to breakdown and absorb nutrients, which can result in malnutrition⁽¹⁾.

What are the symptoms?

The signs and symptoms of Crohn's disease can vary from being mild to severe. They can gradually develop or occur suddenly without warning. There may be periods where no signs or symptoms are present which is known as being in remission. When the disease is in its active state, signs and symptoms include but are not limited to^(1,2):

- Abdominal cramping
- Diarrhea
- Bloody stool
- Weight loss
- Ulcers
- Fever
- Extreme fatigue



Can Crohn's be treated through diet?

Many patients believe that Crohn's disease is caused by what they eat and therefore can be cured by fixing their dietary intake. Unfortunately this is not the case. There is no scientific or clinical evidence that concludes your diet history can cause or contribute to Crohn's. However, watching what you eat can help promote healing and reduce symptoms. Since this disease can affect different parts of your intestine, there are no set dietary recommendations for all patients with Crohn's.

A food diary or journal is extremely beneficial when trying to determine which foods trigger your symptoms.

Instead there are individualized plans and recommendations tailored for each individual based on the area that is affected. In order to reduce symptoms, experts believe that you should identify foods that cause gas, bloating, diarrhea, cramping, and abdominal pain and eliminate them from your diet. A food diary or journal is extremely beneficial when trying to determine which foods trigger your symptoms^(1,2).

FOODS THAT MAY CAUSE AN INCREASE IN SYMPTOMS

- Alcohol
- Carbonated beverages
- Coffee/tea
- Chocolate
- Corn husks
- Dairy products
- Fried foods
- Nuts/seeds
- Raw fruits and vegetables
- Red meat
- Spicy foods
- Whole grains

Tips to decrease intestinal cramping

- Eat small meals every three to four hours.
- Reduce the amount of greasy and fried foods in your diet.
- Limit your consumption of milk and milk products if you are lactose intolerant.
- Reduce your intake of high-fiber foods (nuts, corn, seeds, and popcorn).
- Follow a low-fiber, low-residue diet.

Suggested fluid intake

Since diarrhea is most often a symptom of Crohn's disease, there is chance that patients can experience severe dehydration. Lack of fluids due to decreased intake in combination with diarrhea can affect kidney functioning. This can result in an increase in the prevalence of kidney stones.

Dehydration can also make the patient feel fatigued. In order to avoid these complications, adequate fluids should be consumed throughout the day. It is recommended that every individual drink at least 64 ounces of water per day. A good tip is to take smaller sips when you are consuming fluids because when you take larger gulps, it causes air to enter the digestive tract which results in discomfort⁽²⁾.

Suggested vitamins and minerals

- Vitamin B12
- Folic acid
- Vitamin D
- Magnesium
- Iron
- Potassium
- Calcium
- GastroThera™

It is recommended that patients with Crohn's take a daily multivitamin.

Consult with your medical provider or nutritionist about which vitamins/minerals are right for you.

*GastroThera™ is a prebiotic supplement recommended by Dr. Rogers which provides support for the intestinal tract and assists with immune functioning. This dietary supplement contains glutamine, acacia, inulin, and glucosamine. It helps to create a supportive environment for the growth of beneficial Lactobacillus (L.) bacteria. GastroThera™ is good for patients with compromised immune functioning, colon disease, wound healing from bariatric surgery or diabetes, and for individuals who are engaging in vigorous physical activity.

1. Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America. 2009. 5 October 2009. <<http://www.cdfa.org/info/diet?LMI=4.2>>.

2. WebMD. 2009. 5 October 2009. <<http://www.webmd.com/ibd-crohns-disease/crohns-disease/creating-a-crohns-disease-diet-plan>>.

Low-fiber, low-residue diet

For many patients Crohn's disease results in a more restricted area throughout their small intestine. Eating certain foods can result in residue that scratches the inside of the intestines.

These foods include:

- Seeds
- Corn hulls
- Nuts
- Raw fruits
- Vegetables

A diet that is low in both fiber and residue can help alleviate symptoms associated with irritation⁽²⁾.

