

## CROHN'S DISEASE

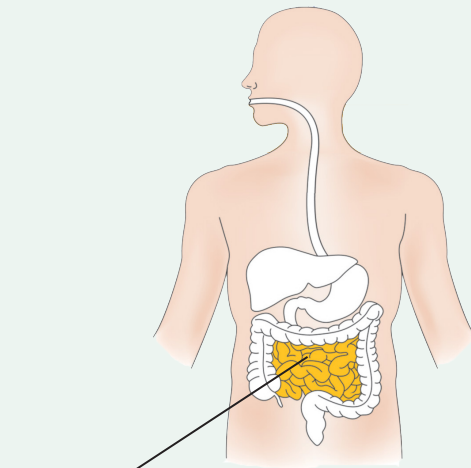
### Important information regarding your health

Crohn's disease causes chronic inflammation (irritation and swelling) of any part of the digestive tract. Though the disease most often affects a part of the small intestines called the ileum, it can affect any part of the digestive system from the mouth to the anus. The inflammation can cause ulcers, pain and diarrhea.

Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis are frequently referred to as inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). Both diseases have no medical cure. Once IBD occurs, it tends to fluctuate between periods of inactivity (remission) and activity (relapse). IBD most commonly begins during adolescence and early adulthood, but can also begin during childhood and later in life. Men and women are equally affected. Crohn's disease tends to be more common in relatives of patients already diagnosed with Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis.

### Common Symptoms:

The symptoms of Crohn's disease can differ from person to person. Common symptoms of Crohn's disease include abdominal pain, diarrhea, fever and weight loss. Some people may experience bleeding from the rectum, which can be serious and may not stop without medical help. Rectal bleeding can lead to anemia and loss of red blood cells, making a person feel tired. Children with Crohn's disease may develop and grow more slowly than most other children, or they may not reach their expected full height.

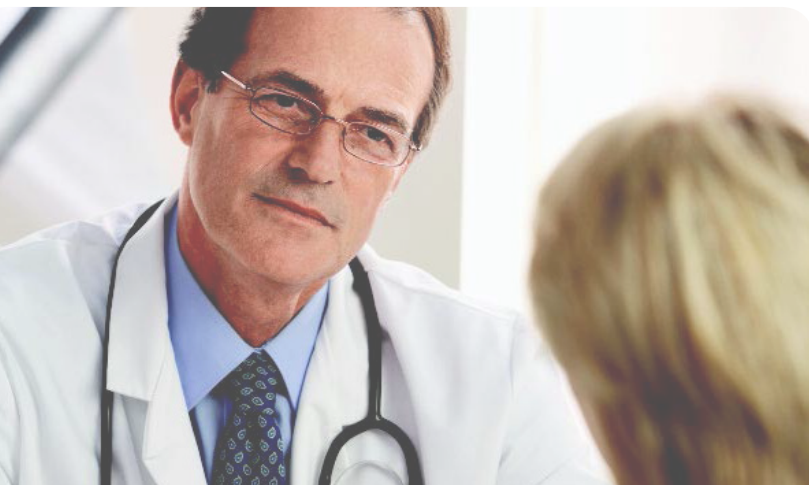


Small Intestines

### Diagnosis:

Crohn's disease can sometimes be hard to diagnose because its symptoms are similar to the symptoms of other gastrointestinal diseases, such as ulcerative colitis. A detailed personal history, a physical examination, and IBD specific tests are needed to accurately diagnose Crohn's disease. A doctor will consider your symptoms and health in addition to using the tests below to determine how to treat your condition:

- **Blood tests:** A physician may perform a blood test to check for anemia. Anemia can mean you have bleeding in your intestines. Blood tests can also show a high white blood cell count, a sign of inflammation in the body. A stool sample can be used to check if you have bleeding and rule out an infection.
- **X-rays:** The doctor may also do an upper gastrointestinal series and small bowel follow-through to look at your small intestine to see if there are obstructions or other problems present.
- **Sigmoidoscopy or a Colonoscopy:** To get a better look inside the intestines your doctor will perform a sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy to test for any inflammation, ulcers, or bleeding. The doctor may also do a biopsy by removing small pieces of tissue from the lining of the intestine. The tissue will be sent to a pathologist – a physician who specializes in the diagnosis of disease via microscopic examination of a tissue sample – to determine what disease you have. The pathologist's diagnosis is key to determining the need for further treatment.





## Physician Notes:

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### Treatment Option:

Treatment for Crohn's disease depends on where the disease is located, how bad the disease is, what problems you already have from the disease and what past treatments you have had. The goal of treatment is to reduce/eliminate the inflammation, correct nutritional problems, and relieve symptoms, such as abdominal pain, diarrhea, and rectal bleeding. Treatment of Crohn's disease may include drugs, dieting, or surgery.

### Drug Therapy:

The doctor may first treat your Crohn's disease with anti-inflammatory drugs. These drugs help to stop inflammation and help to relieve pain and diarrhea. Based on your initial response your doctor may then alter the drugs and medications to include items such as steroids or immune system suppressors.

### Dieting:

No foods are known to cause injury or inflammation to the bowel. However, hot spices, alcohol, greasy foods, and milk products may make diarrhea and abdominal pain worse. Your doctor may recommend a special diet to provide extra nutrients. High-calorie liquid supplements are often used to provide the extra calories and the correct amount of vitamins and minerals required for good health.

### Surgery:

Some people with Crohn's disease may need surgery to treat blockage, fistulas, infection, and bleeding. Surgery usually does not make a person permanently disease-free. The most common surgery for Crohn's disease is removing the diseased section of intestine. In this operation, after the diseased piece of the intestine is removed, the intestine is reconnected.

### Questions To Ask Your Healthcare Provider:

- What type of IBD do I have?
- What treatment option is best for me?
- What potential side effects do they have?
- What dietary changes are recommended?
- Are there lifestyles changes I need to make?

## For more information:

### Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America

733 Third Avenue, Suite 510

New York, NY 10017

**Phone:** 1.800.932.2423

**Internet:** [www.cdfa.org](http://www.cdfa.org)

### Reach Out for Youth with Ileitis and Colitis, Inc.

1250 Union Turnpike

New Hyde Park, NY 10040

**Phone:** 751.358.6328



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