

About Crohn's Disease

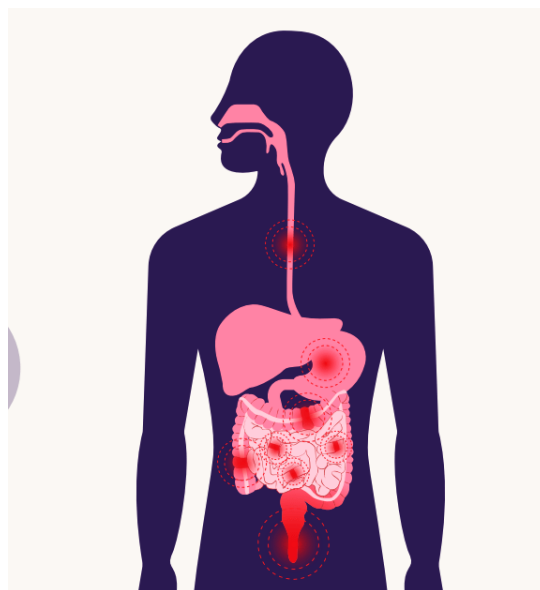
This information sheet is for people who want to learn more about Crohn's disease.

Key points

- Crohn's disease is one of the two major types of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), the other being ulcerative colitis.
- Crohn's disease can involve any part of the gastrointestinal tract from the mouth to the anus but most commonly affects the small intestine.
- Crohn's disease is a lifelong condition where disease symptoms will sometimes be intense while other times they may not be felt at all.
- Crohn's has little effect on life expectancy and most people with Crohn's disease go on to lead happy and fulfilling lives.

What is Crohn's disease?

Crohn's disease is a type of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) that can cause inflammation anywhere in the digestive system. Inflammation can cause redness, swelling and pain, and is the body's response to injury or irritation. The inflammation caused by the disease usually affects the end of the small bowel and/or the large bowel. Crohn's disease can affect the full thickness of the bowel and this can result in narrowing (strictures) which can block the bowel (obstruction) or small holes through the bowel (fistulas) to the skin, other loops of bowel or other organs, sometimes causing a collection of pus called an abscess.



What does living with Crohn's disease mean for me?

Crohn's is a chronic condition which means that it is lifelong. There may be times when you have little to no symptoms (remission) and times when symptoms are more active (flare-ups). Some people will have few flare-ups while others may have a more severe case of Crohn's.

What is the cause of Crohn's disease?

The cause of Crohn's is unknown but it seems to be related to genetics and how the environment affects the immune system.

There also appears to be a change in the gut bacteria of people with Crohn's disease but it still isn't clear if the change is caused by inflammation.

It is possible that a diet full of highly processed foods like sugary drinks and fast food, may increase the risk of developing Crohn's. Crohn's is not infectious.

People who have one or both parents with Crohn's disease (or ulcerative colitis) are more likely to develop IBD.

Is there a cure for Crohn's disease?

There is currently no cure for Crohn's disease but medicines, some diet therapies, and sometimes surgery can reduce symptoms. Crohn's has little effect on life expectancy but can result in life-threatening complications. Most people with Crohn's disease go on to lead happy and fulfilling lives.

As you learn to manage the disease you will be able to travel around the world, form healthy relationships, eat out, exercise, and have a career you enjoy. Crohn's disease doesn't mean you have to stop doing the things you love.

For help or information

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