

# Crohn's Disease Treatment

This information sheet aims to help people with Crohn's disease understand more about the treatment options.

## Key points

- There are many ways to manage Crohn's disease and what works for someone else may not work for you.
- The main goal of treatment is to reduce inflammation and symptoms.
- In some cases Crohn's disease complications may be treated with surgery.

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## What kind of treatments are there for Crohn's disease?

Crohn's disease cannot currently be cured but for most people it can be well managed through medication, lifestyle choices and sometimes surgery.

The aim of treatment is to reduce symptoms, control inflammation and heal the bowel. Since Crohn's disease affects everyone differently, each person will need to work with their healthcare team to discover what works best for them. Treatment may also need to change over time if they become less effective.

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## Medications

Medications for Crohn's disease are mainly used to reduce inflammation. The main types include: aminosalicylates (5-ASAs), corticosteroids (steroids), immunosuppressants, biologics, biosimilars, and antibiotics.

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## Diet

Diet has an important role to play in many aspects of Crohn's disease, including treating active disease, managing symptoms, ensuring nutritional adequacy and often complications. Diet may also potentially support remission.

It is important that you discuss with your medical treating team, including gastrointestinal dietitian, diets that may be appropriate for your circumstance to ensure you are not over-treating with diet. Often, objective markers, such as blood tests, stool tests and/or imaging may be applied to work out whether symptoms are from active inflammation or bowel sensitivity to guide advice on diet.

Examples of dietary treatments include: Exclusive enteral nutrition, Crohn's disease exclusion diet, low or moderate FODMAP diet, moderate, low fibre or low residue diet, high energy and protein diet, and oral vitamin and mineral supplementation.

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## Surgery

Surgery for Crohn's disease is a treatment not everyone will need. Sometimes parts of the bowel are too damaged to be healed by medications and the best way to return you to health is with an operation. Many operations are done laparoscopically now (keyhole) with quick recovery. The goal of surgery is to keep as much of the bowel as possible while restoring quality of life.

There are two main reasons why surgery may be an option for you. One, when current therapies are no longer effective and two, when complications like strictures develop. Common surgeries include resection, stricturoplasty, and creating a stoma.

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## Complementary and alternative medicine

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) can be used alongside conventional treatment to reduce symptoms and improve wellbeing. Research is still ongoing in many areas of CAM so always talk about your options with your doctor.

Some areas in which research is exploring include: mind and body wellbeing, supplements such as vitamin D or probiotics, the microbiome, faecal microbiota transplant, mycobacterium avium paratuberculosis, and medicinal cannabis.

**For detailed information on medication types, nutrition, types of surgery, and different complementary and alternative medicines, use the QR code below to visit the Crohn's & Colitis Australia website. You can also download a Crohn's disease management plan to help you manage your symptoms and treatment.**

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## For help or information

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