

## Other conditions connected to IBD

This information sheet is for people wanting to learn about other conditions that can arise when living with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

### Key points

- Anaemia (low blood cell count) is a common condition connected to IBD.
- Bone health can be affected by IBD symptoms and medication. It can help to pay extra care to getting enough vitamin D and calcium into your diet.
- Most conditions will improve after inflammation in the gut is treated.

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### Anaemia

About one in three people with IBD will have anaemia. Anaemia is a lack of red blood cells, which means there is less blood to carry oxygen around the body. This commonly leads to tiredness and sometimes dizziness, headaches, cold hands or feet, pale skin, and shortness of breath. Symptoms can be hard to pinpoint so it's easier to check with a blood test.

Causes of anaemia include low iron (which may happen because of inflammation in your intestines interfering with your body's ability to use or absorb iron and/or blood loss from intestinal bleeding), poor absorption of vitamins and minerals (like vitamin B12 and folate), and use of certain medications.

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### Bones

Many people with IBD have lower than average bone density (strength). There is a natural loss of bone density as people grow older, but people with IBD are at risk at any age. Testing your bone density is an important part of managing IBD. Risk factors include: increasing age, female gender, low body mass index, smoking, drinking alcohol, use of corticosteroids, inflammation, and vitamin D deficiency.

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### Arthritis and joint pain

Arthritis is the inflammation of the joints and is the most common complication of IBD outside of the gut. Arthritis causes joint pain, swelling, reduced flexibility, and sometimes stiff joints. It can be hard to know if the arthritis is connected to IBD, but arthritis symptoms often get better after the gut is treated. A few types of arthritis can affect people with IBD: peripheral arthritis, axial arthritis, and ankylosing spondylitis.

## Skin

Skin complications may be caused by IBD or by the medications used to treat it. Common skin conditions connected to IBD are: erythema nodosum, pyoderma gangrenosum, skin tags, and canker sores. Uncommon skin conditions include sweets syndrome, acrodermatitis enteropathica, pyoderma vegetans, vasculitis, epidermolysis bullosa acquisita, vitiligo, psoriasis, clubbing, and skin cancer.

## Eyes

Most eye conditions connected with IBD are treatable and won't lead to loss of vision if treated. If you notice any eye inflammation it is important to talk about it with your doctor as soon as possible. Some eye conditions include: uveitis, keratopathy, episcleritis, and dry eyes.

## Kidneys

The kidneys clean the body's blood and remove waste through urine. They are found in the centre of the back just below the ribcage. Serious kidney complications are rare in IBD but there are a few milder conditions. Medications can also affect kidney function. Some kidney complications include: kidney stones, hydronephrosis, amyloidosis, glomerulonephritis.

## Liver

Your liver is found in the upper right part of your belly (abdomen). It has many functions but one of its main jobs is to process food nutrients. The liver also produces cholesterol, acids, and bile salts that get stored in the gallbladder before being used to break down fats. Sometimes people with IBD will develop an inflamed liver. Most liver damage is reversible if treated. Some liver complications include fatty liver disease, hepatitis, cirrhosis, gallstones, and primary sclerosing cholangitis.

**For more information on these conditions, their symptoms, and how to treat them, visit the Crohn's & Colitis Australia website through the QR code below.**

## For help or information

Scan QR code for website:



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- [Complications of IBD](#)
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**Phone:** 1800 138 029