

Ulcerative Colitis Treatment

This information sheet is for people who want to learn about treatment options for ulcerative colitis.

Key points

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

What kind of treatments are there for ulcerative colitis?

Ulcerative colitis 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 ulcerative colitis 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.

Medications

Medications for ulcerative colitis are mainly used to reduce inflammation. The main types include: Aminosalicylates (5-ASAs), corticosteroids (steroids), immunosuppressants, biologics, biosimilars, janus kinase inhibitors (JAK Inhibitors), and thalidomide.

Diet

Diet has an important role to play in of many aspects of ulcerative colitis, including symptom management, ensuring nutritional adequacy and potentially treating active disease or supporting 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: high energy and protein diet, low or moderate FODMAP diet, and oral vitamin and mineral supplementation.

Surgery

Surgery for ulcerative colitis 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 occur. The two most common types of surgery for ulcerative colitis are ileostomies and pouch surgery, often called a j-pouch.

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 like probiotics or iron tablets, the microbiome, faecal microbiota transplant, 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 an ulcerative colitis management plan to help you manage your symptoms and treatment.

For help or information

Scan QR code for website:



Use the website search function to find related pages:

- [Medication for IBD](#)
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- [Surgery](#)
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