

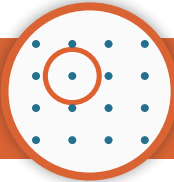
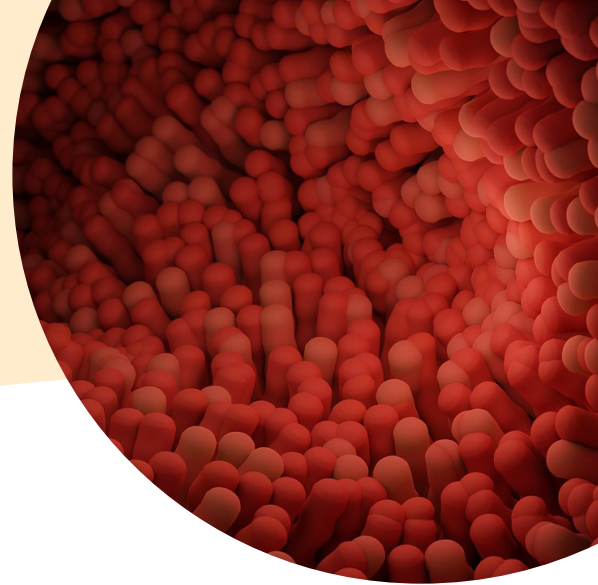


About Ulcerative Colitis



What Is Ulcerative Colitis (UC)?

UC is a chronic (long-term) disease that causes inflammation in the large intestine (colon and rectum). This inflammation causes small sores, called ulcers, to form on the lining of the intestine.¹



What causes UC and who gets it?

The exact cause of UC isn't well understood, but research suggests it may be triggered by an infection in the colon. Normally, your immune system would cause temporary inflammation to protect you from an infection. In UC, the inflammation persists, causing damage to the healthy tissue in the large intestine.¹

UC tends to run in families but can also be triggered by environmental or lifestyle factors such as diet, smoking, or pollutants. Both men and women of any age or race can get UC, but most people are diagnosed in their mid-30s.^{1,2}

What are the signs and symptoms of UC?³

- Belly pain and cramping
- Loose and urgent bowel movements
- Persistent diarrhea
- Blood in the stool

Other symptoms you have may include:

- Loss of appetite
- Weight loss
- Low energy or fatigue (feeling tired)
- Nausea
- Fever
- Anemia (low number of red blood cells)
- In children, delayed growth and development

UC can be unpredictable

The symptoms of UC tend to come and go. When you do have symptoms, it's called a flare.

In between flares, you may not have any symptoms. This is called remission. Remission can last for months or even years.²



How is UC diagnosed?

When you see your doctor, he or she may^{4,5}:

- Ask about your symptoms
- Ask about your family and medical history, and any medicines you take
- Ask about your general health, diet, home environment, and daily activities
- Perform a physical exam
- Order lab or imaging tests such as blood work, stool tests, or X-rays
- Recommend a test called an endoscopy that examines the inside of your colon

What is the difference between UC and Crohn's?

Both UC and Crohn's are types of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). While they do have similar symptoms, they affect the gastrointestinal (GI) tract differently.^{1,6}

| | Ulcerative Colitis | Crohn's Disease |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Part of GI tract affected | Affects the colon and rectum (also called the large intestine) | Can affect any part of the GI tract from the mouth to the anus |
| Portion of bowel wall affected | Inflammation is present in the inner-most lining of the colon | Inflammation can reach the entire thickness of the bowel wall |
| Damaged areas | Damage is continuous, not patchy | Damage appears in patches with some normal areas in between |

If you've been told you have UC²...

- Learn all you can about the disease—this will help you be more prepared to manage and live with UC
- Work closely with your doctor to make decisions about your care and treatment
- Learn coping strategies from others with UC
- Develop a support network of family and friends
- Maintain a positive outlook



References

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6. National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. What is inflammatory bowel disease (IBD)? Reviewed April 13, 2022. Accessed May 18, 2023. <https://www.cdc.gov/ibd/what-is-IBD.htm>

