



November: Crohn's and Colitis Awareness Month

Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) inflames the lining of the gastrointestinal tract and disrupts your body's ability to digest food, absorb nutrition and eliminate waste in a healthy manner. As a result, you might have any of the following concerns: abdominal pain, cramping, bloating, fatigue, diarrhea and loss of appetite. IBD really describes a condition that can be either of two disorders – Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis.

Crohn's Disease

With Crohn's disease (CD), inflammation can occur anywhere in the GI tract but is usually present in the lower part of the small bowel and the colon. Patches of inflammation occur between healthy portions of the gut, and can penetrate the intestinal layers from inner to outer lining. Medication and surgery can help to alleviate the symptoms of CD.

Ulcerative Colitis

Ulcerative Colitis (UC) only affects portions of the large intestine and typically only inflames the innermost lining of bowel tissue. UC can be controlled with medication and, in severe cases, can even "be cured" by surgically removing the entire large intestine.

What causes IBD?

That is a good question and one that researchers are still investigating. Currently, scientists believe that a genetic tendency and a trigger in the environment combine to set off inflammation in the gut. Instead of being dampened down, the immune system then continues to run amok. The chronic process that results can manifest as either Crohn's disease or Ulcerative Colitis. We do know that contrary to what you might think, diet and stress do not cause IBD and relapses. However, both may aggravate your gut and any symptoms that you may be experiencing, they are not thought to cause a relapse of your disease.

A balanced lifestyle

Leading a balanced lifestyle is very important for success in surviving and thriving with Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis.

Exercise. IBD may drain you of energy and the temptation to give up exercise is very strong. Instead of doing high energy, high demanding activity, try some gentle things like walking, swimming or yoga. The point is – keep moving!

Fun, Humour and Gratitude. The IBD is not only physically demanding, but is also a psychological challenge. A sense of humour and a zest for fun will fuel that positive attitude, so find every reason to laugh and enjoy the good things in your life.

Emotional overload. Sometimes the psychological impact of IBD gets to be too much. On top of the physical symptoms, feelings of uncertainty, embarrassment, aversion to being dependent on others, guilt and self-doubt can weigh you down. Be aware of how you are feeling and how these emotions are affecting your quality of life. Seek the support of family and friends.

Stress. Stress does not cause IBD, but for some, it does appear to aggravate symptoms. If you do find that stress bothers your gut, some of the tips above will help you to cope. In addition, try things like meditation, relaxation techniques, and avoiding caffeine.

(Source: www.fciii.ca)


 November is **MOVEMBER** month, men's health awareness,
 visit <http://ca.movember.com> and make a donation !


International Volunteer Day is held annually on **December 5** in order to pay tribute to volunteers and recognize their contribution and dedication throughout the world.

Why volunteer?

There are many reasons why you may decide to volunteer. They can be personal, professional or social:

- to express your interest in a cause;
- to make a difference;
- to strengthen your self-esteem;
- to meet new people;
- to improve your social and communication skills.

According to some studies, **volunteers have a better physical health and have a better quality of life** than non-volunteers.



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