

Living with Crohn's Disease

(CD)

Today is the first day of the rest of your life. While you can't change your diagnosis, you can make **informed choices** so that you can live the **best life possible**. Empowerment starts with information so let's get started.

270,000 Canadians are living with IBD. By 2030, the number of Canadians with IBD is expected to rise to 400,000.



What is Crohn's Disease?

Crohn's Disease (CD) is an inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). It can cause ulcerations (sores) and inflammation (redness and swelling) anywhere along the digestive tract from "gum to bum" but is common in the lower small bowel (ileum) or large bowel.



Why me?

There are common factors that increase your risk of developing the disease and severity.

- **Genetics and Environment:** Research suggests that it may be a combination of factors including genetics and the environment that causes your immune system to react in a harmful way.
- **Ethnicity:** Crohn's disease can affect anyone. Those of Caucasian and Jewish descent seem to be at a higher risk.
- **Smoking:** Research suggests that smoking increases the severity of the disease and increases risk of surgery.

How Crohn's Disease may affect you

Crohn's Disease (CD) is a serious chronic (lifelong) illness. If you have Crohn's disease, you may experience periods of active symptoms (also referred to as a flare), and other times when symptoms are absent (remission). When you are in a flare, symptoms of Crohn's disease can be painful and debilitating.

You may experience

- abdominal pain and cramping
- severe diarrhea
- rectal bleeding
- blood in stool
- weight loss
- diminished appetite

Positive Actions

UC is different for everyone so being involved in your care is critical.



This is your Body and your Life.

Be informed, involved and proactive in your care.



Be your Best Advocate.

Be able to report your symptoms honestly and accurately to your doctor.



Understand your Options.

Know the benefits and risks of each type of medication available to you.



Medication(s) are chosen specifically for you based on your history and severity of disease. It is important that you speak openly and regularly with your doctor so you can make the best decisions for your health - together

Therapy aims to get and keep you in remission
There are safe, effective medications for you.

Medication	Severity	Benefits of Medication	Risks of Medication
Biologics/Biosimilars Protein-based compounds derived from living organisms. Engineered to block inflammatory pathways. Types of Biologics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • α4 β7 Integrin Blocker • Anti-TNF • Antibody to the p40 subunit of IL-12 & IL-23 • Tofacitinib 	Moderate to Severe IBD	Reduces: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inflammation • flares, complications, hospital stays, surgery • diarrhea Supports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mucosal healing 	Infection: Moderate Intolerance: Moderate Allergic Reaction: Moderate
Immunosuppressants Suppress, or reduce, the strength of the body's immune system.	Moderate to Severe IBD	Reduces: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inflammation • flares, complications, hospital stays, surgery • prevents the body from mistakenly attacking itself • use of steroids Supports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mucosal healing 	Infection: Moderate Intolerance: Moderate Allergic Reaction: Moderate Elevated Liver Enzymes* *about 10%
5-ASAs or Mesalamine Anti-inflammatory medicines.	Mild to Moderate IBD	Reduces: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inflammation • flares, complications, hospital stays, surgery Supports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mucosal healing 	Infection: Moderate Intolerance: Moderate Allergic Reaction: Moderate
Steroids short term use only Man-made hormones that are anti-inflammatory medicines. Can be used with other IBD medications.	Severe IBD	Reduces: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inflammation • rapidly reduces severity of flares • reduces some complications • minimizes hospital stays Supports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increases some complications 	Infection: High Intolerance: High Allergic Reaction: Moderate
JAK Inhibitors JAK inhibitors are small molecules in a pill form that interfere with a number of key pro-inflammatory cytokines involved in the development of IBD.	Moderate to Severe IBD	Reduces: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inflammation • flares, complications, hospital stays, surgery • diarrhea Supports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mucosal healing 	Infection: Moderate Intolerance: Moderate Allergic Reaction: Moderate

*Please note this is a condensed version of the benefits. Please visit: <https://cdhf.ca/benefit-and-risk-assessment-tool-for-ibd-treatments/> for the full version of the benefits and risks assessment tool.

Enjoy your Life to the Fullest

Although Crohn's disease cannot be cured at this time, there are safe, effective medications available and lifestyle choices you can make that help most people control the disease. Visit [CDHF.ca/crohns-disease/](https://cdhf.ca/crohns-disease/) for more in depth information on CD.



CDHF.ca

This infographic was made possible through an unrestricted education grant from:

