Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)

What is IBD?

– IBD is a term used for two separate conditions, UC and Crohn's disease.

– UC and Crohn's disease are both life-long inflammatory conditions of the gastrointestinal (GI) tract

– What is the difference between UC and Crohn's disease?
  • UC occurs in the large intestine (colon and rectum), but can also affect the skin, eyes, and joints.
  • Crohn's most often affects the end of the small bowel (ileum) and the start of the colon, but may occur anywhere along the GI tract.

What causes IBD?

– The exact cause is not known. In IBD, your immune system mistakes harmless bacteria in your gut as dangerous and attacks them. This causes inflammation.

– Diet and stress may make IBD worse, but they are not the sole cause.

– You are more likely to get IBD if you have a family member who has it.

– IBD can occur in men and women at any age, but usually starts between the ages of 15 and 35.

How is IBD diagnosed?

– Your doctor will do a physical exam to look for symptoms. IBD symptoms may include abdominal pain, diarrhea, fever, weight loss, blood or pus in stool, fatigue, and reduced appetite.

– Imaging, blood, and stool tests may be done to rule out other conditions.

Fast facts

• IBD is a term used to describe two different diseases, ulcerative colitis (UC) and Crohn's disease.

• IBD is most common in people who have other family members with the disease.

• Diet and stress may make IBD symptoms worse, but they are likely not the cause of the disease.
How is IBD treated?

– The goal is to improve symptoms and slow the disease.
  No single treatment works for all people.

– Treatment depends on symptom severity, but may include antibiotics, aminosalicylates, steroids, immune modifiers, or biologic therapies.

– Certain foods and drinks may make IBD symptoms worse. Talk to your doctor and dietitian about creating a diet for you to make sure you are getting enough calories and nutrients.

Points to remember

– IBD is a life-long disease that may be constant or may have occasional flares.

– IBD can increase your risk for colon cancer and malnutrition.
  The risk is higher if IBD isn’t treated.

For additional information

– Crohn’s & Colitis Foundation – www.crohnscolitisfoundation.org