

CROHN'S DISEASE

Crohn disease, which is one type of Inflammatory Bowel Disease, is a chronic, inflammatory disorder that can cause diarrhea, belly pain, and other symptoms that affect the digestive tract. When it is working normally, the body's immune system kills germs and "bad" cells that could turn into cancer. Sometimes, instead of killing only bad cells, something goes wrong and the immune system starts to attack healthy cells. That is called an "autoimmune response." It is what happens in Crohn disease. If you have Crohn disease, your body is attacking the lining of your digestive tract. This causes inflammation, which can lead to sores (ulcers) and bleeding.

The symptoms of Crohn disease can get better or worse at different times. But the condition cannot be cured. Luckily, there are medicines and other treatments that can improve its symptoms.

SYMPTOMS

The most common symptoms are diarrhea, belly pain, feeling tired, weight loss, and fever. Some people with Crohn disease also get mouth sores, skin rashes, joint pain, and eye redness.

DIAGNOSIS

There are a few tests that can help diagnose Crohn disease. Doctors use imaging tests to look at the upper intestine and a test called "colonoscopy" to look at the lower intestine. During a colonoscopy, the doctor puts a thin tube into your rectum and advances it up into your colon. The tube has a camera attached to it, so the doctor can look inside your colon and the last part of your small intestine. Sometimes, other diagnostic tests are also used, such as upper endoscopy and capsule endoscopy.

TREATMENT

Cut down on foods that make your symptoms worse. Some people have problems with foods that have a lot of fiber, such as fruits and vegetables.

- Quit smoking, if you smoke. Smoking makes symptoms worse and increases the chances that you will need surgery.
- Avoid medicines such as ibuprofen (sample brand names: Motrin or Advil and naproxen (sample brand name: Aleve).

There are many different medicines that help reduce the symptoms of Crohn disease. Almost all of these medicines work by reducing inflammation and the body's immune response. Some medicines treat symptoms when they are at their worst. Other medicines help keep symptoms from starting up or coming back. You might have to try a few different medicines before you find the one that works best for you.

Surgery is sometimes needed if medicines do not do enough to control your symptoms or if the patient has not received proper treatment of Crohn's disease over the years and complications have developed. Surgery does not cure the disease, but it can help you to feel better and return to normal activities. The 2 most common types of surgery to treat Crohn disease work by:

- Removing of the diseased part of the colon

- Re-opening parts of the intestine that have become blocked

INCREASED RISK OF COLON CANCER

Crohn's disease does increase the risk of developing colon cancer. Your risk depends on how long you've had it and whether your colon is affected. Experts suggest that people with Crohn disease that affects the colon get screened early and often. This might mean having a colonoscopy a few years after being diagnosed, and every 1 to 2 years after that.

SUMMARY

People with Crohn disease often need lifelong treatment. But with treatment, many people with the condition are able to live fairly normal lives. In all cases, appropriate follow-up care by an expert doctor is essential to treat the disease and prevent or properly manage complications that may arise.

Doctors at Comprehensive Digestive Institute of Nevada have received extensive training for the management of Crohn's disease from the top Inflammatory Bowel Diseases Academic Centers in the U.S. Our doctors have had a number of internationally recognized research publications and review article on Inflammatory Bowel Diseases. We strive to help all patients find relief from Crohn's disease. We offer compassionate care using the most advanced techniques available.