

UnityPoint Health - Allen Hospital

Digestive Health Center

Inflammatory Bowel Disease

Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) includes Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. There is no special diet for IBD. What you eat does not cause worsening of the disease. When IBD is controlled, you can eat a regular, healthy diet that includes fresh fruits, vegetables, high-fiber grains and milk. However, if you have intestinal strictures or recurrent bowel obstructions, your doctor may advise you to follow a low-fiber diet permanently.

During times of "flare-ups", or when you have pain, diarrhea and/or cramping, eating soft foods may be more comfortable and tolerable. Flare-ups can be a time of poor nutrition intake and may worsen your health if you are not getting enough nutrients.

Consult your doctor immediately if you are having a severe flare-up, such as severe diarrhea, severe cramping, blood in your stool or unexplained weight loss.

NUTRITION TIPS DURING A FLARE-UP:

1. Eat several small meals and snacks.
2. Choose softer foods that are lower in fiber and fat, such as:
 - a. Tender, cooked lean meat, such as beef, pork, poultry and fish
 - b. Soft cooked eggs
 - c. Breads and cereals with less than two grams of fiber
 - d. Canned fruits in light syrup
 - e. Canned vegetables (limit gassy vegetables, such as broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, corn, onions and dried beans)
3. Limit nuts, seeds and popcorn.
4. Drink plenty of fluids. Aim for eight cups or more a day if you are having diarrhea.
5. Select lactose-free milk if dairy is aggravating diarrhea. Milk is an important source of protein, calcium and vitamin D.
6. Drink nutritional supplements, such as Ensure, Ensure Plus, Ensure Clear, Boost, Boost Plus and Boost Breeze or equivalent, if you are struggling to eat enough.

SOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Visit the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America at www.cdfa.org

For nutrition information, hover over "LIVING WITH CROHN'S & COLITIS". Click on "Search Our Resources". Click the box next to "Diet & Nutrition" and then click "Search". This will filter several articles on nutrition.