

Your nutrition pathway for Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)

Why is nutrition important in IBD?

- IBD puts you at a higher risk of malnutrition.
- Malnutrition can occur from:
 - nutrient losses (like from diarrhea)
 - poor nutrient absorption (due to inflammation)
 - poor appetite or periods of not eating well
- Malnutrition:
 - worsens your symptoms of IBD
 - reduces your ability to heal
 - delays recovery after surgery
 - prolongs your stay in the hospital
 - impacts your quality of life
- Malnutrition can affect all people, ages, and body sizes.

What is the purpose of this nutrition pathway?

This pathway is a map for you and your healthcare team. It helps you to track your nutrition care for your IBD so you can ensure you get evidence-based support.

You and your healthcare team can modify the pathway for your healthcare needs.

A registered dietitian can help you with your nutrition. Ask your healthcare team for a referral or learn how to [self-refer](#) to a Health Link dietitian.

1. My IBD Diet Nutrition Pathway

- This self-managed pathway may not work for everyone with IBD. What works for one person may not work for another.
- You will be encouraged to change the way you eat. If you are experiencing malnutrition, don't try it.

2. Check for your risk of malnutrition

- Malnutrition may worsen your IBD. Tools have been designed to help you know if you are experiencing malnutrition.
- Complete the malnutrition risk assessment tool called the [Canadian Nutrition Screening Tool](#).
- Once you've completed your self-assessment, look up your nutrition risk in the table below.

| Malnutrition Risk: Score | Required Action |
|--|--|
| Nutrition Risk - NO | Continue to question 3 |
| Nutrition Risk - YES (Two "YES" indicate nutrition risk) | You can self refer to a registered dietitian by calling Health Link at 811 or by completing a self-referral form . |

Tell your healthcare team if you have these symptoms:

- You've lost weight without meaning to
- Your Body Mass Index (BMI) less than 18.5 ([check your BMI](#))
- There is blood in your poop or ostomy bag

Talk to your healthcare team if your symptoms don't improve, get worse, or keep interfering with your everyday activities.

3. Do you have a history of bowel obstructions?

- This nutrition pathway is not recommended if you have a history of bowel blockages or narrowing of your intestine.
- Check with your Gastrointestinal specialist to see if these conditions affect you.

4. Check for symptoms of active disease

- Symptoms of active disease may include:
 - abdominal pain
 - blood in your poop or ostomy bag
 - diarrhea
 - fever
 - reduced appetite
- If you are in active disease, there are therapeutic diets that may help. Before trying them on your own, [self-refer to a dietitian](#).

5. You are ready to start My IBD Diet

- See page 2 to learn more.

What is My IBD Diet?

My IBD Diet is a way of eating that helps to lower inflammation (swelling) and manage your symptoms.

- [My IBD Diet: Eating to Lower Inflammation](#)
- [My IBD Diet Plate](#)

My IBD Diet: Eating to Lower Inflammation

What is IBD?
Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) is a condition that results in long-term inflammation (swelling) of the digestive system (gut).
There are 2 types of IBD: Ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease.

My IBD Diet
My IBD Diet is a way of eating that helps to:
• lower inflammation
• manage your symptoms like abdominal pain or diarrhea
• support your immune system and microbiome
• improve your quality of life
Follow the tips below to help you feel better.

Choose foods with healthy fats
Foods with healthy fats help the immune system to lower inflammation.

Monounsaturated fats
• almonds • olives
• avocados • pecans
• cashews • pumpkin seeds
• oils like olive and avocado

Ulcerative colitis
• continuous inflammation
• affects only the large intestine and rectum

Crohn's disease
• spots of inflammation
• affects all parts of the gut from mouth to anus

What is the microbiome?
There are trillions of bacteria in the bacteria, called microbes, make up your gut.
What you eat can add helpful microbes (lower inflammation) or can add harmful ones (worsen inflammation).

My IBD Diet Plate
Foods on My IBD Diet plate have been shown to cause fewer symptoms of Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD).
Use My IBD Diet plate as a guide for which foods to choose at meals. This can help you:
• manage symptoms
• lower inflammation (swelling) in your gut
• improve your quality of life

Starchy foods (25% of meal)
Choose starchy vegetables, lentils, and grains more often.

Protein foods (25% of meal)
Choose lean protein foods at each meal.

Olive oil
Include 1-4 Tbsp (15-60 mL) each day.

Fruits and vegetables (40% of meal)
Eat brightly coloured fruits and vegetables, including leafy greens, at meals.

Dairy foods (10% of meal)
Include dairy foods at meals.

Limit salt
Flavour foods with herbs and spices instead of salt. Avoid high salt foods.

Water
Choose water at meals and throughout the day.

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Find these resources and more at [Nutrition Education](#) (ahs.ca/NutritionHandouts)

If you continue to have symptoms after following My IBD Diet

- Try to identify foods that may cause you symptoms. [A bowel and symptom journal](#) can help you track.
- To manage gas and bloating, limit fizzy (carbonated) drinks and eat fewer gas-causing foods such as broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage.
- To manage [diarrhea](#) or [high output ostomy](#), consider a home-made [oral rehydration solution](#), increasing soluble fiber, and limiting added sugars.
- To manage [constipation](#), consider eating more foods higher in fiber and drinking more water.
- Drink water throughout the day. Try for 9–12 cups daily.
- Try to identify what causes you stress. Stress management can help with your symptoms. Check out [Stress Management \(alberta.ca\)](#) for ideas to try.
- Be more active. Try to build up to 150 minutes each week. Try walking, biking, gardening, or swimming.

Learn more

- www.ahs.ca/IBD
- [MyHealth Alberta: IBD](#)
- Nutrition Education (ahs.ca/NutritionHandouts), search topic “Digestive Health”
- Find Nutrition Workshops & Classes (ahs.ca/NutritionWorkshops)
- Canadian Digestive Health Foundation (cdhf.ca), search IBD
- Alberta Healthy Living Program (ahs.ca/ahlp)



My Crohn's & Colitis Toolkit



Physician Learning Program

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