

# Crohn's Disease: Exclusive Enteral Nutrition

Exclusive enteral nutrition (EEN) is a proven nutrition therapy for active Crohn's disease.

It is a short-term diet where you get all your nutrition from a nutrition supplement drink (also called formula). It is used to heal the inflammation or swelling in your digestive system (gut).

EEN may be the main therapy for some people with Crohn's disease. Other people may need to keep taking medication for Crohn's disease while on EEN.

Ask your healthcare team what is right for you and your treatment plan.

## What are the benefits?

EEN gives your body the nutrition and energy it needs to help get your Crohn's disease into remission. It may also:

- improve your symptoms
- lower swelling
- support growth and development (children)
- help with catch-up weight gain (children)

If you are having surgery, EEN before surgery can help you:

- lower your risk of complications
- heal and recover faster
- spend less time in hospital

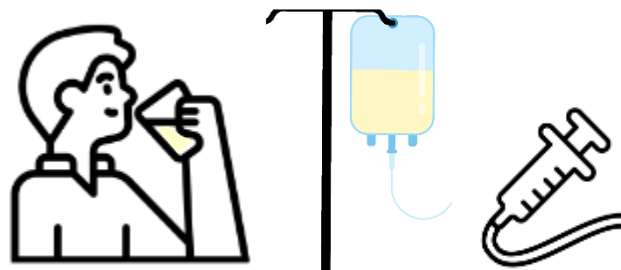
## How does EEN lower swelling?

The exact reason EEN lowers swelling is not yet known. It might:

- change the mix of bacteria in your gut (the microbiome)
- give your gut time to heal by only needing to digest liquids
- help you get more nutrition

## How do I follow EEN?

Depending on your treatment plan, you can drink the nutrition supplement drink or get it through a feeding tube.



**EEN is split into 3 treatment phases.** Your dietitian can help you decide what type of nutrition supplement drink and how much you need daily.

**Phase 1:** All your nutrition comes from nutrition supplement drinks and water. No other food or drinks are allowed during this phase.

**Phase 2:** Work with a dietitian to gradually add food and other drinks into your meals and snacks.

**Phase 3:** Return to a way of eating that best manages your symptoms.

## Are there any side effects?

Some people may have:

- bloating
- constipation
- diarrhea
- nausea
- get tired of the taste of the nutrition supplement drink

Talk to your healthcare team if you experience any of these. Your healthcare team will monitor you closely to see how your body reacts. If there is no improvement, you may need to try a different treatment.

## Nutrition supplement drinks

While you are in phase 1, you won't need any other groceries aside from your nutrition supplement drinks and water.

Look for sales, coupons, and check flyers or advertisements. Some companies have online coupons, and some are available in-store.

You may also find deals at wholesale or warehouse companies, or by talking to your pharmacist.

Generic or store-brand nutrition supplement drinks may cost less than brand name products. Talk to your dietitian about these products.



Some health benefits and insurance programs may cover the cost of nutrition supplement drinks.

Talk to your healthcare team for more information.

## Partial enteral nutrition

Partial enteral nutrition is when you drink only nutrition supplement drinks for 1–2 meals daily. Other meals and snacks are regular foods.

This may help lower swelling in your gut or keep it from getting worse. If phase 1 of EEN is difficult to stick to, talk to your dietitian and healthcare team to learn more.

## Phase 1

Phase 1 will last \_\_\_\_\_ weeks.

My start date: \_\_\_\_\_

My end date: \_\_\_\_\_

The nutrition supplement drink I use is called: \_\_\_\_\_

I need \_\_\_\_\_ bottles of nutrition supplement drink each day.

I need \_\_\_\_\_ cups of water each day.

During this phase, you only have nutrition supplement drinks and water. No other food or drinks are allowed, including solid foods, chewing gum, candy, coffee, or tea.

Other food and drinks may make your gut take longer to heal or not heal completely.

Your healthcare team will check to see if the swelling in your gut is getting better during this phase.

### Tips to try

- Pack nutrition supplement drinks when you will be away from home for a meal or snack. Use an ice pack or pour it into an insulated drink container with ice to keep it cold.
- Try different nutrition supplement drink flavors.
- Change the temperature of the nutrition supplement drink
  - Pour it over ice or heat it and drink it warm.
- Change the texture of the nutrition supplement drink. Freeze it in ice pop molds or blend it with ice.
- If you need to miss a special meal, like a birthday celebration, freeze a portion of the meal or dessert to enjoy in phase 2 or 3.
- Connect with family and friends outside of mealtimes. Go for a walk, play a card game, or do a craft together.

## Phase 2

Phase 2 will last                weeks.

My start date:

My end date:

In phase 2, you will be able to gradually add other food and drinks back into your meals and snacks. The amount of nutrition supplement drinks you need will gradually go down as foods get added in.

If your gut needs more healing time or you need to gain weight, you may need to keep having some nutrition supplement drinks. Your healthcare team will help with this.

### How to gradually add foods

To help you gradually add other foods to your meals and snacks, follow the example below. Work with your dietitian to choose the type and amount of food to have at meals.

<b>Day 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eat 1 meal of regular foods.</li><li>• Drink 75% of your total daily nutrition supplement drinks from phase 1.</li></ul>
<b>Day 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eat 2 meals of regular foods.</li><li>• Drink 50% of your total daily nutrition supplement drink from phase 1.</li></ul>
<b>Day 3</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eat 3 meals of regular foods.</li><li>• Drink 25% of your total daily nutrition supplement drink from phase 1.</li></ul>
<b>Day 4</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eat 3 meals of regular foods. Eat snacks between meals.</li><li>• Drink 25% of your total daily nutrition supplement drinks from phase 1.</li></ul>
<b>Day 5</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eat regular meals and snacks.</li><li>• If you are eating well, you can stop drinking nutrition supplement drinks.</li></ul>

## Phase 3

You can now eat regular meals and snacks. Eat a variety of foods each day to get enough nutrition. Drink enough fluids daily to stay hydrated.

To learn more about how you can help keep swelling in your gut low and your body feeling its best, check out:

- Nutrition Education ([ahs.ca/NutritionHandouts](https://ahs.ca/NutritionHandouts))
  - Search using the topic filter Digestive Health, or type “My IBD Diet” into the search bar for information on inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) and nutrition.

### For more information

Visit MyHealth Alberta ([myhealth.alberta.ca](https://myhealth.alberta.ca))

- Search for [Inflammatory bowel disease \(IBD\)](#).

### For more support



- Talk to your healthcare team.
- Call Health Link at 811 and ask to talk to a dietitian or complete a [self-referral form](#) on [ahs.ca/811](https://ahs.ca/811).
- Visit [ahs.ca/Nutrition](https://ahs.ca/Nutrition).
- Call, text, or chat with 211 Alberta ([ab.211.ca/](https://ab.211.ca/)) to find out about financial benefits, programs, and services.

