

My IBD Diet: Eating to Lower Inflammation

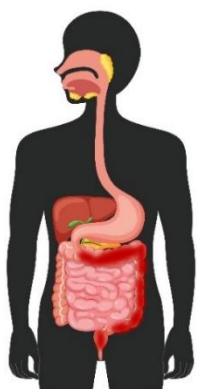
If you have a history of obstruction or stricturing disease, contact your healthcare team before following this diet information.

South Asian Foods

What is IBD?

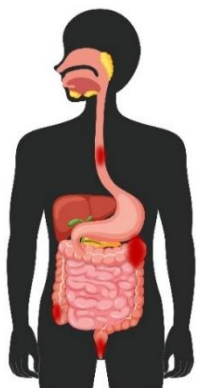
Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) is a condition that results in long-term inflammation (swelling) of the digestive system (gut).

There are 2 types of IBD: Ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease.



Ulcerative colitis

- continuous inflammation
- affects only the large intestine and rectum



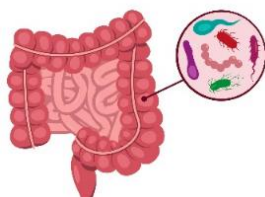
Crohn's disease

- spots of inflammation
- affects any part of the gut from mouth to anus

What is the microbiome?

There are trillions of bacteria in the gut. These bacteria, called microbes, make up your microbiome.

What you eat can add helpful microbes (lower inflammation) or can add harmful ones (worsen inflammation).



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 unsaturated fats

Foods with unsaturated fats help the immune system to lower inflammation.

Monounsaturated fats

- almonds
- avocados
- cashews
- oils like avocado, mustard seed, and olive
- olives
- pecans
- pumpkin seeds

Omega-3 fats

- fatty fish, like herring, salmon, sardines, and trout
- chia seeds, hemp seeds, walnuts, and ground flaxseeds
- omega-3 eggs
- seafood and shellfish, like mussels, oysters, and shrimp

Some fish, seafood, and shellfish can be packed in brine, like canned tuna or sardines. Brines are often high in salt (sodium). Choose fresh, frozen, or canned products packed in water. Check out the "Salt (sodium)" section to learn more.

Choose foods with fibre

Fibre is the part of plant foods that our bodies can't fully digest and absorb. Fibre helps to keep the microbiome healthy.

Insoluble fibre

Foods with insoluble fibre can help prevent constipation by adding weight to poop to make it move faster through the gut.

Examples of foods with insoluble fibre:

- fruit with peels like apples and pears
- fruits with tough, stringy pieces like pineapple
- nuts and seeds including whole flaxseeds
- wheat bran
- whole grains, like amaranth
- whole grain breads and pastas, roti, chapati, and ragi (finger-millet)
- vegetables:
 - dark green leafy vegetables, like arugula, collard greens, kale, and spinach
 - cucumbers, peppers, potatoes, and others with peels or seeds

Some people may find that foods with insoluble fibre worsen symptoms during a flare. This does not happen to everyone.

If these foods cause symptoms, try peeling and cooking to soften them or blending them into soups and smoothies.

Gel-forming soluble fibre

This type of fibre dissolves in water and turns into a thick gel. It may support the microbiome and help to lessen diarrhea.

- barley, oats
- carrots
- citrus fruits like oranges
- ground chia seeds
- ground flaxseeds
- konjac noodles
- legumes
- mushrooms
- peeled apples and pears
- soybeans

If you have been told to take a soluble fibre supplement, look for these on the ingredient list:

- guar gum
- partially hydrolyzed guar gum
- psyllium (Metamucil®)
- wheat dextrin (Benefibre®)

Ask your healthcare team before taking a supplement.

Prebiotic fibre

Prebiotic fibre is a type of fibre that feeds the helpful microbes in the gut.

- agave
- chicory root
- garlic
- inulin fibre supplement
- Jerusalem artichokes
- onions

Some people may not tolerate these foods during a flare. If a food worsens your symptoms, try it again when in remission.

Resistant starch is a type of prebiotic fibre found in foods like:

- barley
- lentils
- oats
- plantains
- potatoes
- rice

To raise the resistant starch in these foods, try cooking and cooling, then reheating when ready to eat. Check out [Canada.ca/FoodSafety](https://www.canada.ca/food-safety) for cooling and storing tips.



Tip: Uncooked oats have more resistant starch than cooked. Soak oats in milk or yogurt in the fridge overnight instead of cooking them to make overnight oats.

Flavour with fruit, nuts, or seeds.

Choose foods with protein

You need to get enough protein daily to stay strong and healthy.

During an IBD flare, your body needs even more.

Eat food with protein at every meal and snack.

Plant-based foods

- Nuts and seeds: almonds, chia seeds, pumpkin seeds, and walnuts
- Legumes: beans like kidney beans (rajma), lentils (dal), and chickpeas (chana)
- Soy foods: edamame (raw soybeans), nutri (soy granules) tempeh, and tofu
- Whole grains: amaranth, ragi (finger millet), and quinoa

Animal-based foods

- Lean meats: chicken, fish, mutton
- Eggs

Dairy foods

You can have dairy foods even during a flare. If dairy bothers you, try lactose-free options.

- Paneer
- Yogurt: plain (Greek or dahi), lassi

Choose polyphenols & antioxidants

These occur naturally in plant foods. They help lower inflammation and improve symptoms of IBD.

Examples of foods higher in these include:

- green tea
- herbs and some spices, like ginger and turmeric
- nuts
- vegetables and fruits
- whole grains

To get a variety of polyphenols and antioxidants, choose colourful vegetables and fruits, like:



blueberries | cabbage | eggplant | turnip | yam



broccoli | gourds | green beans | okra | spinach



mango | peppers | pumpkin | sweet potato | squash



beets | peppers | radish | strawberries | tomato



banana | cauliflower | garlic | parsnip | potato

Choose probiotics

Fermented foods contain probiotics which are helpful bacteria. Eating these foods can add helpful bacteria to your gut.

- dahi
- buttermilk (chaas)
- lassi
- idli and dosa
- kanji

If you are interested in taking probiotic supplements, talk with your healthcare team first.

Choose vitamin D

People with IBD are at a higher risk of having low vitamin D levels. Vitamin D helps with bone health and supports immune function. These foods include:

- fortified dairy products like milk and yogurt
- egg yolks
- fatty fish, like herring, salmon, sardines, and trout
- fortified soy beverage
- fortified orange juice
- soft margarine

Health Canada recommends that all healthy Canadians take vitamin D supplements. Talk to your healthcare team to find out what is best for you.

What to limit on My IBD Diet

Some food and drinks can make your IBD symptoms worse. Limit or avoid them when able.

Limit alcohol

- beer
- ciders
- coolers
- spirits
- wine

Drinking less alcohol is better for your health. Talk to your healthcare provider if you have questions about alcohol and your health.

For more information, visit ccsa.ca/alcohol.

Limit highly processed foods

These are food and drinks that are prepared (processed) with excess:

- emulsifiers and food additives
- saturated and omega-6 fats
- salt (sodium)
- sugar or sugar substitutes

Emulsifiers & food additives

These are added to processed foods to help preserve and hold them together.

While they are safe to eat, they may make inflammation from IBD worse.

Check food ingredient lists for:

- carboxymethylcellulose (cellulose gum)
- carrageenan
- maltodextrin
- polysorbate 80
- titanium dioxide

Nitrates and nitrites are added to food in high amounts to keep them from spoiling. Foods with added nitrates and nitrites may cause inflammation.

They are added to foods like:

- bacon
- deli meat and ham
- hot dogs and wieners
- sausage

To learn more, visit [Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca) and search [limit highly processed foods](#).

Salt (sodium)

Too much salt (sodium) can make inflammation worse. Limit foods that are high in salt.

- Choose fresh foods and foods with no salt added.
- Read food labels to choose foods that are lower in sodium.
- Prepare food at home more often. Use low sodium ingredients.
- Eat less processed foods like 'heat and eat' products.
- Eat less salty snacks like chips and pretzels.
- Try baking at home instead of buying these foods at a bakery or grocery store.
- Instead of salt, try asafoetida (hing), cardamom, carom seeds (ajwain), coriander, cumin, curry leaves, fenugreek, garam masala, mace, mint, turmeric, star anise, saffron, and tamarind (imli).
 - During an IBD flare certain spices may be less tolerated than usual for some people.
 - These include: black pepper, garam masala, paprika, chili, and other peppers.

You may need more sodium if you have diarrhea or a high ostomy output. Talk to your healthcare team to learn more.

Saturated and omega-6 fats

Foods with omega-6, and saturated fats can make inflammation worse. Limit foods like:

- store-bought cakes, cookies, and muffins
- deep-fried foods, like donuts and French fries
- processed meats like deli meats and hot dogs
- convenience snack foods like Kurkure, rusk, and namkeen
- vegetable oils like corn, safflower, soybean, and sunflower

Sugar substitutes

Sugar substitutes taste sweet but aren't made with sugar. They may change the balance of good and bad microbes in the gut.

Check ingredient lists for sugar substitutes like:

- acesulfame-potassium
- aspartame
- sucralose
- sugar alcohols like: isomalt, maltitol, mannitol, sorbitol, and xylitol

Limit red meat

Red meat is higher in saturated fat. This includes:

- beef
- goat
- lamb
- mutton
- pork
- veal

Choose lean cuts of red meat when possible.

- Trim visible fat from meat.
- Pick cuts that have less fat throughout the meat like tenderloin, sirloin, pork loin, and extra-lean ground meat.

For more information



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.

For more information on My IBD Diet, visit:

- Nutrition Education (ahs.ca/NutritionHandouts)
- Inflammatory Bowel Disease (ahs.ca/IBD)
- MyHealth.Alberta.ca
 - Search: [Inflammatory Bowel Disease \(IBD\)](#)

