

What Is The Treatment?

The goal of treatment is to eliminate symptoms, maintain remission and prevent relapse.

Common classes of medicine used to treat Crohn's disease include:

Corticosteroids - May be used at initial diagnosis or during flares to treat symptoms rapidly. Not for long term use due to side effects.

Aminosalicylates - A maintenance medicine used to decrease inflammation.

Typical medications include:

Asacol HD, Apriso, Lialda, Delzicol, Pentasa

Immunomodulators - Suppress the overly active immune response that occurs in Crohn's disease.

Typical medications include:

6MP, Imuran, Methotrexate

Biologics - These medicines target an inflammatory protein that plays a key role in the inflammatory process.

Typical medications include:

Humira, Cimzia, Remicade, Entyvio

Surgery may be required when complications arise or when medications fail.

Surgery does not cure Crohn's disease and there is risk for recurrence after surgery.

Crohn's Disease And Colon Cancer

- Crohn's disease increases the risk for colon cancer beyond that of the general public.
- Risk is based on duration of disease as well as location and severity of disease.
- Screening colonoscopies often begin after eight years of disease.
- Colonoscopy is typically recommended every one to two years thereafter.
- While frequent screening does not reduce the chance of developing colon cancer, it does help diagnose it early and improve chances of recovery.

Learn More About Crohn's Disease

Connecticut GI

www.ConnecticutGI.org

**Crohn's and Colitis
Foundation of America**

www.ccfa.org

CROHN'S DISEASE



www.ConnecticutGI.org

What Is Crohn's Disease?

- Crohn's disease is an inflammatory condition that can affect any part of the digestive tract from the mouth to the anus.
- Crohn's most commonly affects the end of the small intestine (known as the ileum) and the colon.
- Inflammation and ulcers from Crohn's involve the full thickness of the colon wall but can be interspersed by healthy tissue.
- Crohn's is a lifelong or chronic condition that cannot be cured but can be treated.

Who Gets Crohn's Disease?

- Crohn's disease can occur at any age but most commonly occurs between age 15-30. There is also a peak between 60-80.
- Males and females are affected equally.
- More common in developed nations.
- Disease can run in families. 20% of those affected have a first degree relative with inflammatory bowel disease.
- More common in caucasians and people of Jewish Ashkenazi descent.
- Smokers are more likely than nonsmokers to develop Crohn's. Disease can also be more severe.

What Causes Crohn's Disease?

- The exact cause of Crohn's disease is not known.
- Researchers believe a combination of genetics, the immune system & environmental factors contribute to Crohn's disease.

What Are The Symptoms?

Symptoms may vary based on the location of disease within the digestive tract but can include:

- Diarrhea
- Abdominal pain & cramping
- Blood in stool
- Reduced appetite & weight loss
- Bowel urgency

Organ systems outside of the digestive tract can also be affected by Crohn's and are called extra-intestinal manifestations:

- Eye disorders
- Skin conditions
- Arthritis
- Bone loss
- Liver disease
- Kidney disorders
- Symptoms can be gradual in onset and it is not uncommon to have symptoms for years prior to diagnosis.
- There may be periods of remission with no symptoms and periods of flares when symptoms are active.

Making The Diagnosis

More than one test may be needed to make a diagnosis of Crohn's disease. Specific symptoms will guide testing but may include:

- ✓ Blood tests
- ✓ Colonoscopy
- ✓ Upper endoscopy
- ✓ Capsule endoscopy
- ✓ CT or MRI enterography (to visualize the small intestine)

Did You Know?

Crohn's disease affects up to 700,000 Americans and most cases are diagnosed by age 30

Complications Of Crohn's Disease

Crohn's disease affects individuals differently and symptoms can range from mild to severe. Complications can develop in more severe cases.

Fistulas: An abnormal connection between two organs.

Bowel obstruction: A partial or complete blockage of the small or large intestine.

Abscess: A confined pocket of infection.