

# Crohn's Disease

Crohn's Disease is a severe inflammation of the lower bowel.

## What to look for

- Abdominal Pain
- diarrhoea.
- cramps or pain after eating
- fever
- loss of appetite, fatigue, or weight loss

In Crohn's disease, a chronic disorder of the intestines affects digestion and leads to general physical weakness.

Crohn's disease is typically diagnosed among people in their twenties and thirties, but the disease can also occur in infants and children. The disease can last a lifetime and can be controlled but not cured: Crohn's patients usually experience attacks of ABDOMINAL\_PAIN and diarrhoea followed by weeks or months of remission.

Parts of the intestinal wall may thicken, accumulate fluid, ulcerate and get infected. This leads to poor absorption of food.

## Causes

The actual cause of Crohn's disease is unknown, but it may be a link with immune function and genes. Apparently the body's own immune system attacks a part of the intestine, causing the area to become inflamed. Smokers are more likely to suffer this disease than non-smokers.

## Traditional Treatment

At present, there is no cure for Crohn's disease. Treatment usually involves three steps to keeping the disease under control.

- drug therapy
- a restricted diet
- then hospital treatment, and if necessary, surgery.

If the disease does not respond to drugs and diet, your doctor may recommend surgery. You can have either a partial colectomy which removes the damaged section of the colon but preserves the bowel if possible or a total colectomy which removes the entire colon and the end of the small intestine.

## Alternative/Natural Treatments

Even though Crohn's disease is not curable, many people with mild forms of the disease or Crohn's-like symptoms have found ways to relieve intestinal distress without drugs or surgery.

**Herbal Therapies** – Powdered [slippery elm](#) (*Ulmus fulva*) bark is soothing to the intestines. Tea made with [chamomile](#) (*Matricaria recutita*), [marsh mallow](#) (*Althaea officinalis*) root, or bayberry (*Myrica cerifera*) is also soothing.

**Homoeopathy**– For symptomatic relief of diarrhoea, try the following remedies (after checking with a Health Professional)...

- Mercurius corrosivus if your stool contains blood and mucus and you have a feeling that the bowel has not emptied.
- [Arsenicum album](#) if you have profuse diarrhoea with a burning or colicky stomach, anxiety, and chills.
- Podophyllum if you have greenish, painless diarrhoea with gurgling and stomach cramps that are worst in the morning.

### **Dietary Considerations**

When the disease is active, you may speed the healing process by drinking juice squeezed from green, leafy vegetables such as cabbage, which are loaded with chlorophyll. Drinking broth made from seaweeds may also be helpful.

Some doctors recommend a high-protein, high-fibre, low-fat diet to speed healing, with extra B vitamins, vitamin A and E, fish oils, magnesium, calcium, zinc, and copper. Always check with your doctor or a naturopath before taking vitamin and mineral supplements, however, because some have laxative or constipating effects.

### **At-Home Remedies**

Use a juicer to squeeze your own cabbage and other green, leafy vegetable juices, and drink at least one glass every day. When diarrhoea strikes, drink a cup of [chamomile](#) or [marsh mallow](#) root tea.

### **When to seek further professional advice**

- You experience prolonged diarrhoea, especially if you have had an ileostomy; you may become dangerously dehydrated.
- You have any of the symptoms listed in the section above.