

# Inflammatory bowel disease

## What is inflammatory bowel disease?

Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) is a term used to describe a group of diseases of the bowel. They can affect anyone at any age and are chronic (life-long) conditions. The diseases involve periods of symptom remission and periods of 'flare-ups'. With ongoing treatment, the symptoms can be effectively managed.

IBD is not contagious. Two common forms of IBD include:

### Ulcerative colitis

Ulcerative colitis involves inflammation and ulceration (sores), which may lead to bleeding, in the inner lining of the large intestine (or colon).

### Crohn's Disease

Crohn's Disease causes inflammation, pain and ulceration (which may cause bleeding) to any part of the digestive system, but commonly affects the small and large intestine. Inflammation affects all layers of the intestine (not just the lining). There may be areas of healthy intestine between areas of diseased intestine.

## Symptoms of IBD

IBD symptoms differ for each person and may include:

- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhoea, which may contain blood or mucous
- Fever
- Loss of appetite +/- weight loss

## Treatment of IBD

The treatment process differs for each patient, depending on the severity and location of the disease, however it will usually involve oral medications to control pain, inflammation and diarrhoea. During times of flare-ups, medications may need to be administered directly into a vein with intravenous therapy.

Depending on the severity, IBD may cause problems that cannot be treated with medications and surgery may be required. You doctor will discuss treatment options this with you.

## If hospitalised

### Admission

The admission process is an opportunity to discuss your child's hospital stay and any special needs they may have while in hospital or for going home.

### Visiting hours

The Cabrini Paediatric Ward does not have set visiting hours.

### Discharge

Your child will be discharged when your doctor is happy with their progress and condition and you are confident with caring for them at home.

Please report to the reception desk in the foyer of the hospital before leaving to finalise any administrative paperwork.

## Care at home

- It is important that your child takes any prescribed medications, even if they are feeling well and are not showing any symptoms of IBD
- Inflammation of the intestines can impair the absorption of essential nutrients, therefore it is important for your child to eat a well-balanced and nutritious diet to prevent malnutrition
- No food has been shown to cause IBD, however some people find that certain foods make their symptoms worse. If your child is unwell and having difficulty maintaining a balanced diet then a dietician can provide individual advice if needed.

## Follow-up

Please contact your doctor's rooms to organise a follow-up appointment.

## When to contact your doctor

- If your child's symptoms are worsening or not improving
- Loss of appetite and losing weight
- Increased pain or diarrhoea

## Questions

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact the Ward using the phone number below.