



## Always preparing for the next attack?

Frequent and urgent diarrhea can be one of the many symptoms of ulcerative colitis

Ulcerative colitis is a form of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). It is a condition that affects the inner lining of the colon (large intestine) and rectum. Ulcerative colitis is a chronic disease that affects more than 65,000 Canadians. It can often be controlled using proven medications.

### What are some of the symptoms of ulcerative colitis?

Symptoms may include:

- Frequent diarrhea
- Blood in stool
- Urgent need to go to the bathroom
- Abdominal cramping
- Persistent fatigue and/or weight loss

**Talk to your doctor about the symptoms you are experiencing. You may have ulcerative colitis.**

To learn more, visit [www.canada.living-better.com](http://www.canada.living-better.com).

## Ulcerative colitis or irritable bowel syndrome

Inflammatory bowel disease — which includes ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease — and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) are often confused since their names are so alike. While IBS can be characterized by an alteration in normal bowel habits, the condition is quite different from ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease.

**Identifying your symptoms is an important step to proper diagnosis.**

Ulcerative colitis	Irritable bowel syndrome
<input type="radio"/> Symptoms occur in sudden, severe flare-ups	<input type="radio"/> Symptoms may be triggered by eating or stress
<input type="radio"/> Frequent diarrhea	<input type="radio"/> Periods of constipation may occur between bouts of diarrhea
<input type="radio"/> Rectal bleeding (blood and mucus in stool)	<input type="radio"/> Mucus often appears in stool
<input type="radio"/> Urgent need to use the bathroom	<input type="radio"/> Urgent need to use the bathroom (having a bowel movement often relieves the pain)
<input type="radio"/> Severe abdominal cramping	<input type="radio"/> Abdominal cramping
<input type="radio"/> No relief at night	<input type="radio"/> Symptoms rarely rouse a sleeping patient
<input type="radio"/> Increased intestinal gas	<input type="radio"/> Bloating, gas
<input type="radio"/> Weight loss	<input type="radio"/> Nausea
<input type="radio"/> Persistent fatigue	<input type="radio"/> Fatigue or headache

## Talk to your doctor

Below are a few examples of the kind of information you should share with your physician, as well as questions you may want to ask.

### Information to share with your doctor:

- Symptoms you're experiencing and the length of time you've had them
- Things that helped relieve your symptoms in the past
- Recent changes to your daily routine (for example, eating, sleeping, recent death of a loved one, divorce)
- Whether you have any relatives who suffer from ulcerative colitis

### Questions to ask:

- Are there any other signs or symptoms you should watch for?
- How is ulcerative colitis diagnosed?
- What treatment options are available for people with UC? What has your physician's experience been with these treatments?
- Is there any treatment that can help relieve your symptoms quickly?
- What are the potential side effects?
- How long will you have to take this treatment?

## Stay informed

The more you know about ulcerative colitis, the better. Below are a few informative websites you might find useful:

- ◆ Canadian Digestive Health Foundation (CDHF) [www.cdhf.ca](http://www.cdhf.ca)
- ◆ Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada (CCFC) [www.ccfc.ca](http://www.ccfc.ca)
- ◆ Canadian Society of Intestinal Research (CSIR) [www.badgut.org](http://www.badgut.org)
- ◆ Living with Ulcerative Colitis [www.canada.living-better.com](http://www.canada.living-better.com)

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