

Glossary

Anaemia

a lack of red blood cells in the blood, which can make you feel very tired, faint or breathless

Anti TNF α

a new type of drug for treating Crohn's Disease (eg: infliximab, adalimumab)

Apheresis

a type of medical technology used to treat people with active IBD. It is thought flare ups are caused by an increase in white blood cells (leukocytes); during apheresis blood is filtered through a column to remove leukocytes and their products, and the remaining blood is returned to the circulation

Azathioprine

a type of drug called an immunosuppressant. IBD may be caused by an increased immune response which leads to inflammation; azathioprine is used to reduce the activity of the immune system (the body's defence system) and reduce the symptoms of IBD. Because azathioprine reduces your immune response, it can make you more likely to develop infections

Colectomy

surgical removal of the colon

Colon (large intestine)

the part of the intestine that follows on after the small intestine. Its function is to absorb water

Colorectal surgeon

a surgeon who specialises in bowel surgery

Colostomy

a surgical operation in which the cut end of the colon is brought through an opening in the abdominal wall and fashioned into a spout. Waste is then collected in a bag, which is fitted over this spout and attached to the skin.

Corticosteroids

a group of hormones (chemical messengers) used as a drug treatment to control IBD (eg: prednisolone, budesonide)

Dietitian

a specially trained individual who is qualified to assess nutritional status and work closely with the patient and doctor to ensure that an appropriate diet is being followed

Duodenum

first part of the small intestine

Endoscopy

a general term for the examination of the inside of the body using a lighted tubular instrument generally inserted through a natural body opening (eg, colonoscopy and sigmoidoscopy via the anus and gastroscopy via the mouth). The endoscopist is a specially trained physician, surgeon or nurse

Enema

the injection of a liquid medication into the bowel through the rectum

Faeces (stools, motions)

waste matter eliminated through the anus

Fistula

an abnormal channel (false passage) between two loops of intestine, or between the intestine and

another organ, or between the intestine and the skin. It is a complication of Crohn's disease in which an ulcer in the intestine breaks through the intestine wall, making tunnels into another part of the intestine or nearby organs. Fistulas occur frequently around the anus and rectum.

Flare-up

a recurrence of symptoms, which can be sudden and severe, after a period of good health

Gastroenterologist

a physician specially trained in the diagnosis and treatment of disorders of the intestine, including Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis

IBD

abbreviation for inflammatory bowel disease

Ileum

lower part of the small intestine, which joins the colon at the ileo-caecal valve

Immunosuppressants

drugs that suppress inflammation over longer periods of time

Induction – (eg, induction of remission)

The use of treatment to lessen symptoms and bring back a temporary return to good health

Inflammation

a natural defence mechanism of the body in which blood rushes to any site of damage or infection, leading to reddening, swelling and pain. The area is usually hot to the touch

Maintenance

the use of treatment to help keep your health in a disease-free, or limited-disease, once you go into 'remission'

Nurse specialist

a nurse who has specific knowledge and interest in caring for patients with a particular condition (e.g. GI nurse, IBD nurse, colorectal nurse)

Obstruction

a blockage of a section of the bowel (either the small or the large intestine), which can cause pain, cramping or bloating. A total obstruction can block stool from passing through the intestine, which can cause severe pain and vomiting that must be treated in the hospital

Prednisolone

a drug of the corticosteroid group which is used to reduce inflammation in IBD. It can be taken orally as tablets, intravenously by injection, or through the rectum by an enema or suppository

Rectum

the lower portion of the colon, where waste is stored before you go to the toilet

Relapse

return of the disease activity after a partial recovery (see 'flare-ups')

Remission

a lessening of symptoms of the disease and a temporary return to good health . Remission can last for a short time or a very long time

Resection

surgical removal of a diseased part of the intestine

Sigmoidoscopy

looking into the sigmoid colon and rectum with a flexible or rigid tube, called a sigmoidoscope

Small intestine

the section of the gastrointestinal tract that connects the stomach and large intestine which digests food and absorbs nutrients after they have passed through the stomach. The small intestine is divided into three parts: the upper region (duodenum), the middle region (jejunum), and the lower region (ileum).

Stools

motions, faeces

Stoma

a small opening in the abdomen created in a surgical procedure called an ileostomy, which is attached to the end of the small intestine. Waste will travel through the small intestine and exit the body through the stoma. A pouch is worn over the opening to collect waste, and the pouch is emptied as needed.

Stricture

a narrowed portion of the small intestine due to inflammation, which can block the passage of digested food and cause crampy pain.

Ulcer

an open sore on external or internal tissues of the body

5-Aminosalicylic acid (5-ASA) (for example: mesalamine, balsalazide, olsalazine, sulfasalazine)

a substance which reduces inflammation in ulcerative colitis and decreases the risk of relapse, and possibly cancer

6-mercaptopurine (6-MP)

a drug closely related to azathioprine, used for reducing flare-ups of IBD