

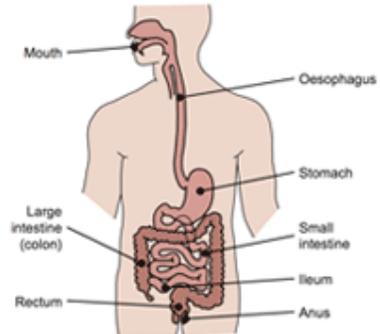
Ulcerative Colitis – Kids and Teens

Your Digestive System

Your digestive system, or GI tract, is made up of several organs that together help your body take in food, break it down, distribute nutrients and get rid of waste.

The **upper GI tract** includes the **mouth, pharynx, oesophagus** and **stomach**. Food is taken in through the mouth, chewed and swallowed down past the pharynx, then passed down through the oesophagus and into the stomach.

The **lower GI tract** includes the **large intestine, small intestine** and **anus**. The small intestine has three parts: the **duodenum** (the first and shortest part of the small intestine, where most chemical digestion takes place), the **jejunum** (the middle part of the small intestine, largely responsible for absorption of nutrients), and the **ileum** (mainly responsible for absorbing vitamin B12, bile salts and other nutrients).



Activity time!

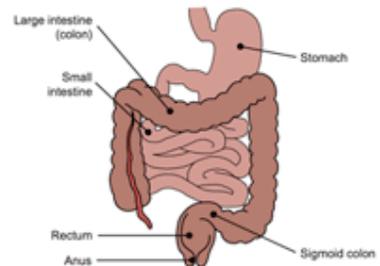
[Click here](#) to draw a picture of your digestive system and colour it in. Do you know where the large intestine is? Take a look at the picture below to see a close-up of this part of the digestive system. Show the picture to your doctor and ask him or her to circle the area that is affected by ulcerative colitis.

For parent information [click here](#)

For the parent: This activity is designed to help your child understand the role of the digestive system and how ulcerative colitis can affect the body. Talk to your child about the drawing and the different parts of the digestive system described in this section.

The large intestine includes the **cecum** (a pouch that connects the ileum to the large intestine, which aids in the breakdown of materials such as cellulose), **colon** (which removes water and salt and stores wastes) and **rectum** (the final part of the large intestine which serves as a storage area for waste).

The **anus** is the outer opening of the rectum and is mainly responsible for getting rid of waste from the body.



Ulcerative colitis only affects the colon (large intestine) and rectum. The inflammation (swelling) affects the mucosa (lining) of the colon.

In comparison, Crohn's disease can affect any part of the digestive system, from the mouth to the anus. The inflammation (swelling) goes deeper into the lining of the affected area than in ulcerative colitis. There can also be normal healthy bowel in between patches of diseased bowel in Crohn's disease.

Here is a list of the different types of ulcerative colitis and how they might affect you.

- **Ulcerative proctitis:** This only affects the rectum and tends to be a milder form of ulcerative colitis.

- **Proctosigmoiditis:** Colitis affecting the rectum and the sigmoid colon (the lower part of colon located above the rectum). Symptoms include bloody diarrhoea, cramps and an urge to use the toilet. There may also be pain on the lower left side of the abdomen.
- **Left-sided colitis:** Continuous inflammation starting at the rectum and reaching as far as the splenic flexure (a bend in the colon near the spleen). Symptoms may include weight loss, loss of appetite, diarrhoea, severe pain on the left side of the abdomen, and bleeding.
- **Pan-ulcerative (total) colitis:** This affects the entire colon. Symptoms can include diarrhoea, severe abdominal pain, cramps and extreme weight loss.