

## Your IBD consultation

### Preparing a plan

#### Can a care plan be created to help me manage my IBD?

Your physician will work with you to prepare a care plan for managing your IBD, which may include specific medications to take when you are and aren't having symptoms. It may also include some lifestyle changes, such as changing your diet, getting enough sleep and quitting smoking. Your plan may change slightly from visit to visit, based on how your IBD and symptoms change, but it should reflect your overall goals and needs. For example, if your goal is to continue working full-time, this will be reflected in your treatment strategy. Your physician may share a written plan with you so that you play an active part in the management of your IBD. As part of this process, your physician should explain your choices for treatment, including their benefits, drawbacks and possible side effects. Here are some examples:

- **DO** get 30 minutes of moderate exercise (eg, walking, swimming, bicycling) most days of the week
- **DO** eat a nutritious diet with regular, balanced meals
- **DO** get enough rest and keep your stress down
- **DO** build a support network for times when you need a bit of help
- **DO** tell your doctor if there is a change in your IBD symptoms or severity
- **DO** take your medicine as your doctor tells you to
- **DON'T** expect too much of yourself or push yourself too hard, especially on days when you aren't feeling well to begin with
- **DON'T** stop your medicine without speaking with your doctor first
- **DON'T** get discouraged and talk to someone if you have difficulty coping



In mild disease, even if you aren't having a lot of problems with your Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis at the moment, it is important to have a plan in place for what to do if your symptoms return. It is also important to tell your physician if you are interested in trying new treatments when they become available.

In severe disease, your care plan for managing your IBD may include surgery and your physician will be able to explain the circumstances in which surgery is appropriate. Your plan may change slightly from visit to visit. But it should reflect your overall goals and needs. For example, if your goal is to have fewer flares over the course of a year, this will be reflected in your treatment strategy.