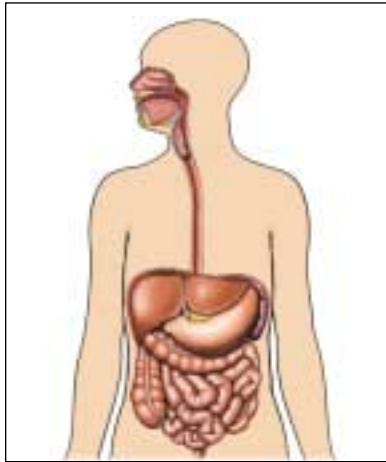


## Background information

### Crohn's Disease



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Crohn's disease is an inflammatory condition that can affect any portion of the gastrointestinal tract; however, it is frequently found at the end of the small intestine (terminal ileum).

The cause of Crohn's disease is unknown, but there are genetic links in some families. Crohn's disease can occur at any age but most often appears in adolescence and early adulthood. The disease strikes approximately seven of every 10,000 people. Risk factors include a family history of inflammatory bowel disease and/or Jewish ancestry.

Symptoms of Crohn's disease are known to include the following:

- Unexplained weight loss
- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Abdominal pain
- Painful and foul-smelling stools

Proper diagnosis and treatment are critical phases in countering Crohn's disease. Through microscopic examination of a biopsy specimen, the surgical pathologist determines whether an abnormality exists and can often specifically diagnose Crohn's disease. The surgical pathologist's diagnosis is often the key to determining the need for further treatment. The proper classification of inflammatory bowel disease (especially Crohn's disease versus ulcerative colitis) determines the appropriate treatment options.

The disease tends to go through cycles of remission (no symptoms) and activity (symptoms). The goal of treatment for Crohn's disease is to control the inflammatory process and alleviate any complications associated with the illness. Crohn's disease is a chronic disease and is associated with a slightly increased risk of small intestinal and colorectal cancer.

## Treatment options for Crohn's disease

(Only a physician can determine the best therapy to treat your condition.)

Prescription medication and/or therapy medication that can control inflammation are usually prescribed. Antibiotics may also be prescribed to treat certain Crohn's disease-associated complications, such as fistulae (abnormal connections between organs) or abscesses.

Surgery may be necessary for those patients who do not respond to prescription and/or medical therapy or if there are complications, such as an infection or obstruction (blockage) of the gastrointestinal tract.

## Important questions to ask your doctor

- What part of my gastrointestinal tract is affected?
- What are my treatment options?
- What are the risks and side effects of these treatment options?
- What can I do to take care of myself during and after treatment?
- How long will the treatment last, and what will be my follow-up?
- To whom may I turn for nutritional and dietary information?

## Sources of additional information

**American College of Gastroenterology** 703/820-7400 • [www.acg.gi.org](http://www.acg.gi.org)  
Patient education brochures, current clinical updates and late-breaking news

**American Gastroenterological Association** 301/654-2055  
[www.gastro.org/public/digestinfo/html](http://www.gastro.org/public/digestinfo/html)  
Access to expert panels, support groups and detailed diagnostic and treatment information

**Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America** 800-932-2423 • [www.cdfa.org](http://www.cdfa.org)  
Patient education, dietary information, support groups and clinical updates

**National Institutes of Health** [www.nih.gov](http://www.nih.gov)  
Patient education information, late-breaking clinical trial news and clinical updates

**Pharmaceutical Information Network** [www.pharminfo.com/disease/gastro/html](http://www.pharminfo.com/disease/gastro/html)  
Access to articles, research news and discussion groups on many gastrointestinal disorders



***Associated Pathology Medical Group, Inc.***

[www.apmglab.com](http://www.apmglab.com) or 800-848-2764