



**Ulcerative Colitis**



## Summary:

- Ulcerative colitis (UC) is a chronic disease that affects all age groups; but is most common between 15 and 30 years old.
- Ulcerative colitis affects the innermost lining of the large intestine (colon) and rectum.
- UC symptoms usually develop gradually over time (not suddenly).
- Symptoms can be treated with drugs that control inflammation; it can be treated by means of a surgery.
- The disease is unpreventable to date; however, there are tips that can be followed to ease the symptoms.

## Colon:

Colon is part of the large intestine, located below the abdomen and occupying a large area of the abdomen. It also extends from the bottom of the rib cage to the pelvic area horizontally. It is the last part of the large intestine, where the colon contains four parts:

- Sigmoid colon (adjacent to the anal area)
- Descending colon
- Transverse colon
- Ascending colon





## Symptoms

Ulcerative colitis symptoms can vary, depending on the severity of inflammation and where it occurs. Signs and symptoms may include:

- Diarrhea, often with blood or pus
- Abdominal pain and cramping
- Rectal pain
- Rectal bleeding — passing small amount of blood with stool
- Urgency to defecate
- Inability to defecate despite urgency
- Weight loss
- Fatigue
- Fever
- In children, failure to grow

## Risk Factors:

- Age, with the risk usually higher under 30 years old
- Family history
- Overconsumption of milk and dairy products
- Taking antacids (steroids)
- Smoking





## **When to see a doctor**

See your doctor if you experience a persistent change in your bowel habits or if you have signs and symptoms such as:

- Abdominal pain
- Blood in your stool
- Ongoing diarrhea that doesn't respond to over-the-counter medications
- Diarrhea that awakens you from sleep
- An unexplained fever lasting more than a day or two

## **Complications:**

- Rectal bleeding
- Colon hypertrophy
- Osteoporosis
- Infections in the eyes, skin and joints
- Increased risk of colon cancer





## **Diagnosis:**

- Medical history
- Family history
- Clinical examination
- Laboratory tests: Blood or urine tests
- Other tests, including: Colonoscopy, X-ray, CT scan.

## **Treatment:**

Treatment depends on the severity of the conditions and symptoms, in addition to the patient's health condition. Treatment is either pharmacological or surgical; where pharmacological treatment involves:

- Anti-inflammatory drugs
- Corticosteroids
- Immune system inhibitors

Surgery often involves removing the entire colon and rectum, with surgery to expel waste naturally. Sometimes, a permanent opening is made in the abdomen through which stool may be passed and collected in an accessory bag.

