



DOCTOR DISCUSSION GUIDE

Managing Crohn's Disease

Being diagnosed with Crohn's disease can feel challenging, but understanding the condition is the first step to taking control of its symptoms. Asking the right questions during your conversation will help you know what to expect and how to better navigate your condition. Familiarize yourself with these common terms before your appointment to help facilitate your discussion.

Vocabulary to Know

Your doctor might mention these common terms. Here's what they mean.

Inflammatory Bowel Disease	The term used to describe conditions that cause inflammation, ulceration, and bleeding in the intestines, usually as a result of an improper immune response. IBD includes ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease. IBD should not be confused with "irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)" which does not lead to inflammation and damage caused by the body's immune system.
Ileum	A portion of the small intestine, between the jejunum and the cecum, which is often affected by Crohn's disease.
Bowel Thickness	IBD can cause the wall of the bowel to thicken in response to chronic inflammation and damage to the tissue from ulcerations. Measuring the thickness of the bowel wall can help diagnose IBD and see how much damage the disease has caused.
Colonoscopy	A procedure used to help diagnose IBD. A scope is passed through the colon, rectum, and intestine.
Obstruction	A condition where part of the bowel became narrowed, closed off, or otherwise constricted such that the normal passage of stool is not possible. Bowel obstructions can have serious complications if untreated and require immediate medical attention.
Stricture	A narrowing of the bowel, often caused by scar tissue or swollen tissue in the bowel in response to chronic levels of inflammation and ulceration.
Flare	A term sometimes used to describe the period of time when a person is having Crohn's symptoms, such as diarrhea, bleeding, and pain.
Fissures	Small tears in the anus that often result from straining, constipation, and prolonged diarrhea. These tears are painful, can cause bleeding, and may take time to heal.
Fistula	A hole or opening in the intestine that allows gastric fluid to leak out. These openings may connect two parts of the body or organ systems that are not usually connected (such as the GI tract and the pelvic organs). Fistulas that are not treated may lead to infections.
Prednisone	A type of anti-inflammatory, prescription medication called glucocorticoids, or steroids. Often used to treat Crohn's flares, prednisone helps reduce inflammation in the body by suppressing the immune system.

