

Taking Charge of Your Health When Living With IBD

When living with IBD, it is important to be the healthiest version of yourself!



Eat a well-balanced diet. Consider getting an assessment to learn if you are well nourished. Ask if you need to take any vitamins or supplements.

Stay active throughout the day and engage in exercise as recommended.



Take medications as recommended by your prescriber to get the best treatment for your IBD.

Smoking is known to make some forms of IBD worse and is not recommended for any patients. If you smoke, ask your healthcare team for help with quitting.



Ask your healthcare team if you need any vaccines or tests to stay healthy.



Be sure you are up to date on these vaccines:

- ✓ **Influenza:** Receive the inactivated influenza vaccine every year.
- ✓ **COVID-19:** Keep up to date with COVID-19 vaccines or boosters.
- ✓ **Pneumococcal:** If you are at least 19 years of age and taking a medicine that suppresses your immune system, you should get vaccinated against pneumococcal diseases, such as meningitis or pneumonia.

Vaccines to ask about before you begin IBD treatments:

- ✓ **Chickenpox and shingles:** Ask if you need to have these vaccines based on prior infections or vaccine record.
- ✓ **Measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR):** Ask if you have had all MMR vaccines. If you are unsure, your provider can test your immunity. If needed, get the full vaccine series.



Follow up with cancer screening

- ✓ **Colorectal cancer:** If you have had IBD symptoms for at least 8 years or have certain risks for colorectal cancer, you may need a colonoscopy sooner than generally recommended.
- ✓ **Cervical cancer:** If on certain medications, get screened for cervical cancer with a Pap test every year or every 2 years if human papillomavirus (HPV) negative.
- ✓ **Skin cancer:**
 - If on certain medications, get a full body scan by a dermatologist every year.
 - Protect skin from sun exposure.

Bone health

- ✓ **Bone density:** If you have ANY risk factors for osteoporosis (such as being postmenopausal, a smoker, or taking steroids for more than 3 months), you should get a dual energy x-ray absorptiometry (or DXA) scan to test the density of your bones.



Other important tests

- ✓ **Depression and anxiety:** Living with IBD can be difficult. Get screened for depression and anxiety at least every year and consider reaching out for help whenever needed.
- ✓ **Eye exam:** Every year.
- ✓ **Tuberculosis (TB):** If on certain medications, get tested for TB exposure every year.

