

South Asians With IBD: Talking About Your IBD Diagnosis

South Asian patients with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) experience unique issues and challenges when managing their disease. Cultural views may conflict with the best treatment options. Here are some tips when talking with healthcare professionals (HCPs), family, and friends about IBD.



With your HCP

- ✓ Be up front about your **quality of life**. Are you able to work, go to school, hang out with friends and family, and attend events and gatherings?
- ✓ **Do not** minimize your symptoms
- ✓ **Discuss the stresses** in your life
- ✓ Ask about **dietary counseling** from a nutritionist or nutrition clinic
- ✓ Ask about **new treatments** and **clinical trials**
- ✓ Ask about managing long trips, including transporting and storing medications
- ✓ Have a discussion about the **safety of complementary and alternative therapies**
- ✓ Let him/her know that your treatment decisions are family decisions and that you would like your family to be present when discussing next steps for treatment
- ✓ If needed, ask if a translator can be present
- ✓ Ask if you (and your family) can be supported by a social worker and/or mental health counselor with **respect to your journey**



When talking

With your family and friends

Conversations can be difficult with family. They may not have heard of IBD and may not want to hear about it. Be considerate and respectful when you talk to them.

- ✓ Be aware of “**log kya kahenge?**” or “**what will people say?**” when making decisions about your care
- ✓ **Refuse the stigma** that family may introduce; **do not fear** that you are bringing shame upon yourself or your family
- ✓ **Help them understand** what causes IBD and that it is not brought on by diet
- ✓ Your focus is on **getting treatment** and **getting better**
- ✓ Do not reject medication or surgery for complementary and alternative therapies; explain that you have done your research and understand that **delaying treatment can lead to poorer quality of life**
- ✓ If you feel shame about IBD and feel unable to advocate for your needs, it is important to seek care from a mental health counselor who can help you navigate the psychosocial aspects of IBD