

Embracing a balanced diet for Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)



Living with Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) is a uniquely individual experience, with dietary needs varying greatly from person to person.

It's important to acknowledge that there's no universal diet that fits everyone with IBD.



The journey begins with understanding which foods agree with your system and which provoke symptoms.

Incorporating a wide range of nutrient-rich foods that are kind to your gut is a step towards crafting a diet that's not only enjoyable but also supports your health.

By understanding your body's responses, prioritising hydration, wisely managing fibre intake, considering the role of supplements, and adopting a holistic health approach, you can effectively mitigate IBD symptoms.

Your diet can be a cornerstone in your IBD management strategy.



Using a food diary

A practical approach to personalising your diet is the use of a food diary.

This simple yet effective tool can help you track your food intake and observe how different foods affect your IBD symptoms. Recording the foods you eat, the severity of symptoms after meals, and even your emotional state can unveil patterns and help identify potential triggers or foods that are well-tolerated.

This personalised approach allows for tailored dietary modifications aimed at reducing flare-ups and enhancing daily well-being.



Managing fibre intake wisely

Fibre's role in IBD management is nuanced. Although it's beneficial for overall digestive health, it can sometimes worsen symptoms during active flare-ups.

During remission periods, reintroducing fibre gradually can help your system adjust without causing discomfort. Focus on soluble fibre, which is softer on the gut, and include foods like bananas, cooked vegetables, and oatmeal in your diet. The key is to listen to your body's response to fibre and adjust your intake, aiming for a balance that supports your digestive health without triggering symptoms.



Considering supplements

In the landscape of IBD, where dietary restrictions and the disease's impact on nutrient absorption can pose challenges, supplements often become necessary. Essential nutrients that might require supplementation include vitamin D, calcium, iron, and omega-3 fatty acids. These nutrients play critical roles in maintaining overall health and compensating for the dietary gaps that IBD and its management might create.

However, it's imperative to consult with a healthcare professional before introducing any supplements into your regimen. A healthcare provider can ensure that the supplements you consider are appropriate for your specific health needs and do not interfere with your IBD medications.



Prioritising hydration

Hydration is a cornerstone of managing IBD effectively. Water is essential for various bodily functions, including facilitating digestion and preventing constipation, a common challenge for individuals with IBD. It is recommended to drink at least eight glasses of water daily.

Additionally, herbal teas can be a soothing alternative, offering hydration while being gentle on the digestive system. It's important to limit the intake of caffeinated and alcoholic beverages, as they can irritate the gut and exacerbate IBD symptoms.

A holistic approach to IBD management

Diet is a significant component of managing IBD, but it's not the only factor to consider. A comprehensive approach to IBD management includes regular consultations with healthcare professionals, implementing stress management techniques, and maintaining an active lifestyle.

These elements work synergistically to support digestive health, manage symptoms, and improve quality of life for individuals with IBD.

Seeking professional guidance

Working closely with a dietitian who specialises in IBD is advisable. They can offer personalised dietary advice, assist in navigating the complex world of food choices, and ensure that your diet remains balanced and nutritionally adequate.

This professional guidance is invaluable, helping to tailor a dietary plan that meets your unique needs and preferences, ultimately finding the optimal diet for your situation.

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Registered in England and Wales number 00475557

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05/24049