

I HAVE WHAT???

INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE DEFINED

Inflammatory Bowel Disease or “IBD” is a group of lifelong chronic disorders characterized by inflammation in the gastrointestinal tract. The two primary forms of IBD are Crohn’s Disease and Ulcerative Colitis. It is NOT the same as Irritable Bowel Syndrome.

WHAT IS INFLAMMATION?

Inflammation is the result of the body’s immune system thinking that its own bowel (the small intestine and/or the colon) is foreign and is attacking it. The bowel is damaged by the attack which leads to inflammation, which can cause swelling, redness, and ulcers. This is called an auto-immune process.

WHO GETS IBD?

IBD affects an estimated two million Americans of all ages and backgrounds. Globally, IBD tends to occur in industrialized nations rather than developing countries for reasons that aren’t well understood.

SYMPTOMS OF IBD MAY INCLUDE:

- Abdominal pain
- Rectal Bleeding
- Fatigue
- Fever and chills
- Weight loss
- Joint pain
- Fistulas
- Abscesses
- Frequent diarrhea (may contain blood and/or pus)
- Urgency to use the bathroom

HOW DID I GET THIS?

The causes of IBD are unknown. Theories for its causes include an interaction between genetics, the intestinal immune system, and bacteria in the intestines. Scientists have identified over 160 potential genetic associations with Crohn’s Disease or Ulcerative Colitis.

WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CROHN’S DISEASE AND ULCERATIVE COLITIS?

Crohn’s Disease can involve the entire digestive tract, from the mouth to the anus. Unlike Ulcerative Colitis, Crohn’s Disease impacts the full thickness of the wall of the bowel. The main symptoms are abdominal pain and cramping, especially if the small bowel is involved, and diarrhea, especially if the colon is involved.

Ulcerative Colitis only affects the lining or mucosa of the large intestine, called the colon. It can involve just the lower colon or rectum or the entire colon. The main symptoms are rectal bleeding, diarrhea and sudden urges to go to the bathroom.

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