

Crohn's Disease



Overview

This chronic disease of your digestive tract makes it hard for you to digest food properly. Most often, Crohn's disease affects the lower part of your small intestine (called the "ileum") and the upper part of the colon. But the inflammation can happen anywhere along your digestive tract.

Causes

We don't know what causes Crohn's disease. It may be linked to your genes. It may be linked to a problem with your immune system. Smoking increases your risk. So does eating a diet high in fat. Some medications (like aspirin, ibuprofen, antibiotics and birth control pills) can increase your risk, too.

Symptoms

With Crohn's disease, you may have frequent bouts of cramping, abdominal pain and diarrhea. And this may cause you to lose weight. You may also experience things like tiredness, joint pain, fever, nausea and loss of appetite. Your eyes may be red and painful. You may have anemia. And you may have red, tender bumps under your skin.

Treatment

Treatment for Crohn's disease begins with medications. And, your doctor may ask you to rest your bowels. To do this, you'll drink nutrient-rich liquids instead of eating. Or, you may be given liquids through a feeding tube or an IV. This lets your intestines heal. You may also benefit from surgery. Your healthcare provider will create a care plan that's right for you.