

Understanding your Medication



Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) can seem like a medicine machine at certain points in the cycle of your illness. Treatment varies depending on whether you are in a flare up or whether your illness is in remission. And it focuses on trying to fight the inflammation in your intestine. For most children and youth, treatments are based on adult treatment experience although an increasing number of studies are being done on pediatric and adolescent patients.

We are far from medical experts, yet it helps to understand what your doctor is recommending and how it may affect your body - not only medically but also socially in terms of the side effects: how you can cope with prednisone moonface and how many magazines you need to have to get through a treatment of remicade.

*The Best Medicine:
Laughter, Family, Friends
and Support*

Tips for Managing Your Own Drug Plan!

If the bottle says to take with food or a full glass of water - FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS. (You can get a bleeding ulcer if you don't have food in your stomach).

Use a WEEKLY PILL CONTAINER to keep track.

Always keep your meds with you in case you get delayed or want to make a change of plans.

Wear a MEDIC ALERT bracelet.

Make sure you swallow pills right away and they don't sit in your mouth.

Pay attention to doses and interactions between different drugs. You will often be tapered off medication - watch for how different levels affect you.

Check your VITAMIN and MINERAL levels and make sure you maintain. Consult your doctor or dietician before starting.

Be careful of CAPSULES. Sometimes they are not fully digested and may come out whole!

Pills are often digested in the large intestine and not the small. If you have an ostomy, make sure you know where the medication is digested or you may not be getting what you need!

Always finish your prescriptions even if you feel better!

Keep a LIST OF MEDICATIONS in your purse or wallet and carry a DOCTOR'S NOTE stating the medication you are taking.

When travelling by air, keep all medications in their original bottles from the pharmacy.

Become FRIENDS with your PHARMACIST. They can help facilitate your prescriptions and visits

Take responsibility for your own medications and learn about the ones that have been prescribed for you. Medications have different rules and it is important to know how to adjust to each one.

- Does the medication need to be taken at a certain time of day?
- What happens if you miss a dose? Do you take a catch up dose or not?
- How soon will symptoms return after you stop medication?

The Basics: Conventional Medicine to Treat IBD

1) Aminosalicylates

Brand Names: mesalamine (Asacol®, Pentasa®), olsalazine (Dipentum®), balsalazide (Colazol®), sulfasalazine

- These drugs all contain 5-Aminosalicylic Acid (5-ASA) which interferes with how our intestines handle inflammation.
- They are used for moderate inflammation.
- These can be given orally in pill form or rectally (get used to that one!) with enemas and suppositories.

2) Corticosteroids

Brand Names: prednisone (Deltasone®), methylprednisolone (Medrol®), hydrocortisone, budesonide

- Your first thoughts are all about Bodybuilding but no, these play a different role.
- These are used to help treat flare ups as they are powerful and fast acting . a short term limited treatment.
- They are anti-inflammatory but also decrease the activity of the immune system which can make you catch a few other things in the meantime!
- These can be given intravenously, orally, rectally or topically.

3) Immunomodulators

Brand Names: azathioprine (Imuran®, Asazan®), cyclosporine (Sandimmune®, Neoral®), 6-mercaptopurine (Purinethol®), tacrolimus (Prograf®), and methotrexate (MTX®, Rheumatrex®, Mexate®)

- These weaken or modify the immune response which decreases inflammation.
- They help to keep you in remission.
- Can be oral, topical or injected.
- Some take a while to kick in (3-6 months) while others are fast acting and may be given by injection.

4) Anti-TNF

Brand Names: infliximab (Remicade®), adalimumab (Humira®), certolizumab pegol (Cimzia®)

- These genetically engineered medications are made from living organisms and their products, such as proteins, genes, and antibodies.
- interfere with the body's inflammatory response in IBD by targeting specific molecular players in the process such as cytokines.

5) Antibiotics

Brand Names: metronidazole (Flagyl®), ciprofloxacin

-Help reduce intestinal bacteria and suppress intestinal immune system.

-Long term therapy.

Alternative Therapies to treat IBD

In addition to medication, there are other ways to treat Inflammatory Bowel Disease. All treatments should be approved by your health practitioner in advance.

Nutrition Therapy
Naturopathy
Osteopathy
Acupuncture
Massage
Physiotherapy
Surgery
Laughter

Produced by the CCFC Youth Advisory Council

