

Working with IBD

For someone with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), working can often be a complex map to navigate, but the difficulty can be minimized if we are well educated and prepared for adversity. Ultimately you want an understanding and accommodating workplace, but this is not always the case.



IBD Dream Job: Toilet Testing Facility

Workplace Tips:

- Legally, you do not have to declare on an application form or in an interview that you have IBD.
- Some companies have equal opportunity programs - they are interested in increasing female employees and employees with a disability. Here it may be an advantage to declare your disability, if you are comfortable with it.
- If this is a long-term job or career, you will want to discuss your IBD with your supervisor or manager. Only discuss the details you are comfortable with. You may want to bring printed information to facilitate your discussion.
- Tell a trusted co-worker about your IBD. Let them know your situation. Having at least one person at work that knows what is truly going on can be a big help.
- Have a backup. If you're having a bad IBD day and you just can't make that next shift, have someone dependable you can call to cover your shift, provided your manager allows this.
- If you are not able to make it into work, tell your manager/supervisor ASAP. They appreciate having as much notice as possible.
- Employers are legally obligated to support your disability- for example, allowing washroom access outside of break periods. IBD is legally a physical disability.
- Take needed breaks. If you have to go to the bathroom GO! The world is not going to end if you have to leave for a few minutes. Chances are if you're worried about going to the bathroom you are not properly focused on work anyways.
- At some periods with your IBD, you may need to take time off work. Disability programs that offer financial assistance may be available to you- check with your provincial and federal government for information.
- If you are temporarily not able to work full-time, consider a less stressful part-time or casual job. Volunteer work is another great option.

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