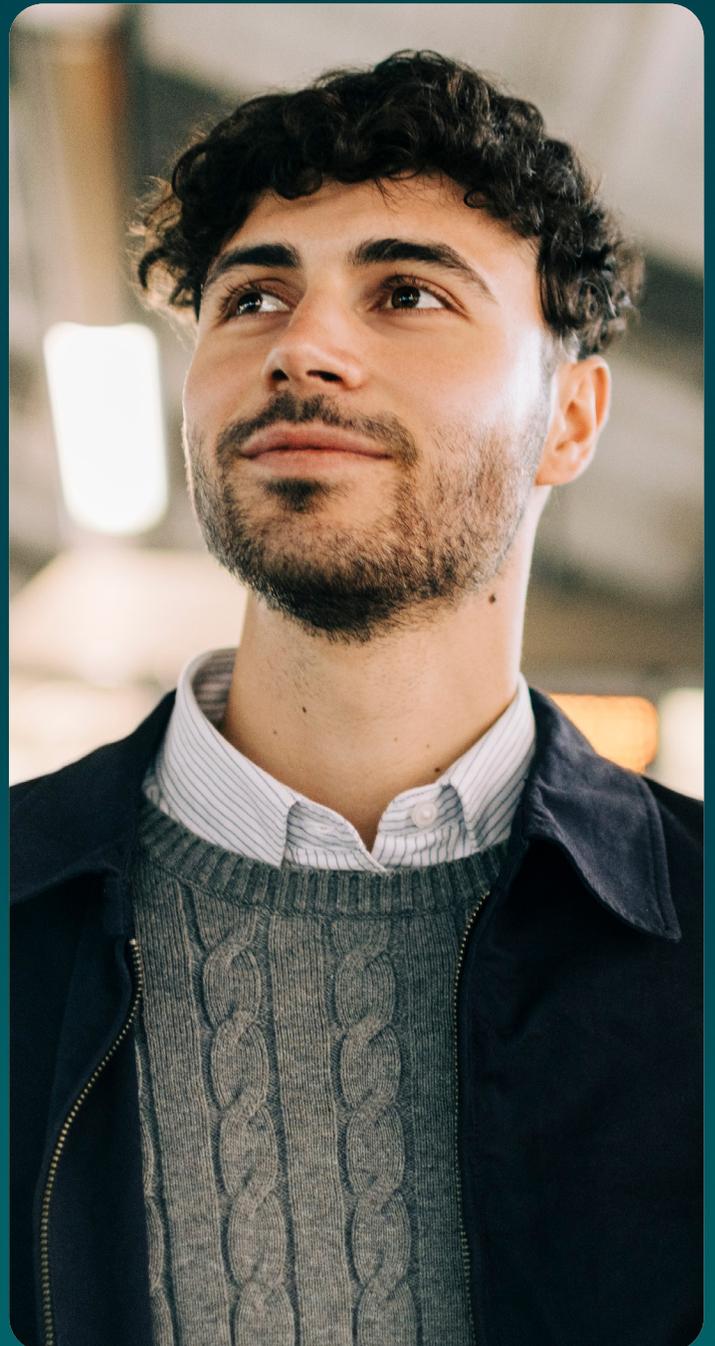
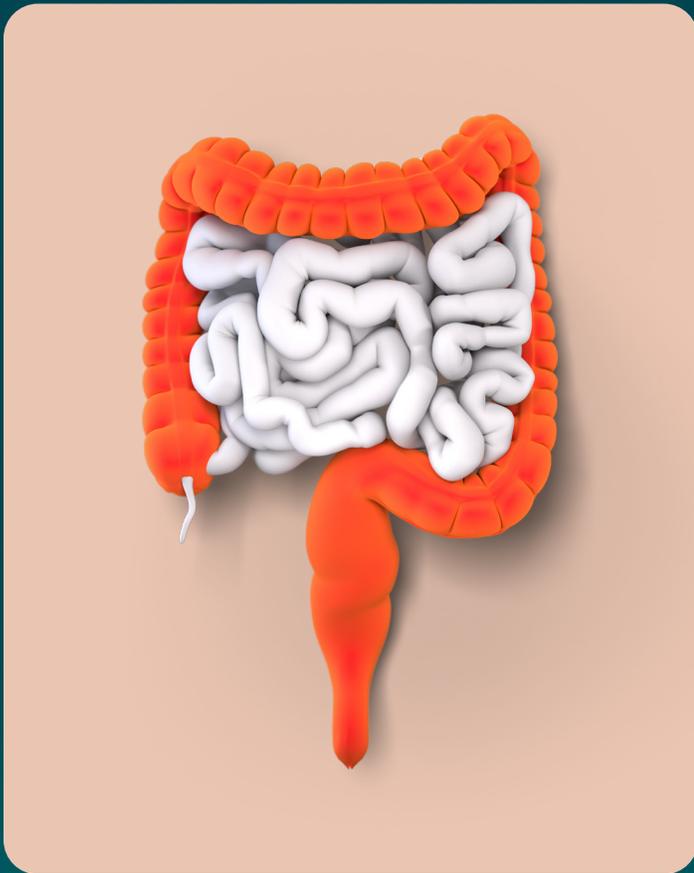


# Management of ulcerative colitis

LIVING WITH  
IBD

UNDERSTANDING THE JOURNEY



# Living with IBD is a journey

Ulcerative colitis (UC) is a type of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). Learning about UC and ways to help manage it can be a good start for your journey. Pace yourself as you work with your care team to chart the best path forward.

## Understanding inflammatory bowel disease (IBD)

**IBD is a chronic, lifelong disorder that involves inflammation of the digestive tract**

It can often be managed, but not cured. It is considered an autoimmune disorder because the body's own defense system mistakenly attacks healthy parts of the digestive tract.

## IBD is different from IBS (irritable bowel syndrome)

IBD and irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) are often mistaken for one another. Although both affect the gastrointestinal (GI) or digestive tract, the two conditions are different.

### **SIMILARITIES BETWEEN IBS AND IBD:**

- IBS and IBD are both chronic conditions that affect the digestive tract
- IBS and IBD share symptoms like stomach pain and changes in bowel movements

### **DIFFERENCES BETWEEN IBS AND IBD:**

- IBS does not cause inflammation
- IBS does not cause symptoms beyond the GI tract
- IBD is an autoimmune disease, IBS is not
- IBD causes damage to the digestive tract, IBS does not

The exact causes of IBD are complicated and not entirely clear; however, it is believed that a combination of the factors below may play a role



### **THE GENES YOU MAY HAVE INHERITED**

5%–20% of people with IBD have an immediate family member with the disease.



### **ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS**

Factors like lifestyle and where you live may trigger an immune response.



### **YOUR BODY'S IMMUNE SYSTEM**

Your natural defense system has an abnormal reaction to certain environmental factors.

~2.4M

IBD AFFECTS ROUGHLY 2.4 MILLION AMERICANS

## There are 2 main types of IBD: ulcerative colitis (UC) and Crohn's disease

Your immune system normally protects your body from germs and infections. With inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), your immune system attacks your healthy digestive tract. This creates inflammation that can lead to tissue damage.

Ulcerative colitis



Ulcerative colitis is only found in the large intestine (colon and rectum)

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Ulcerative colitis may be progressive, meaning that some patients will experience worsening disease over time

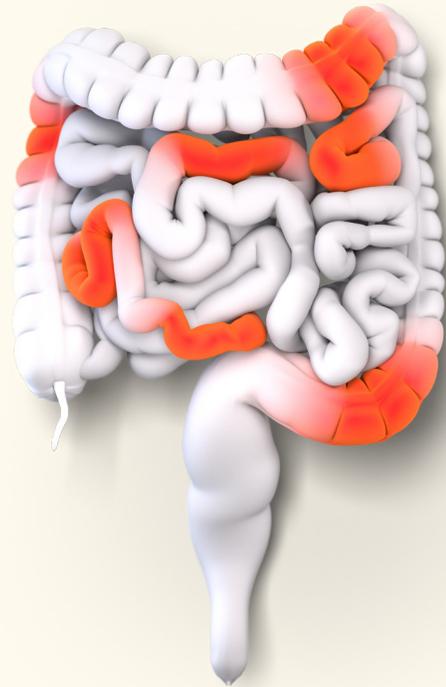
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Inflammation typically starts in the rectum, but may spread continuously to involve the entire colon

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Inflammation only occurs in the innermost lining of the large intestine

Crohn's disease



Crohn's disease can affect any part of the digestive tract, from the mouth to the anus

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Crohn's disease is usually progressive, and many patients will experience worsening disease over time

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Crohn's disease may appear in patches, affecting some areas of the digestive tract but not others

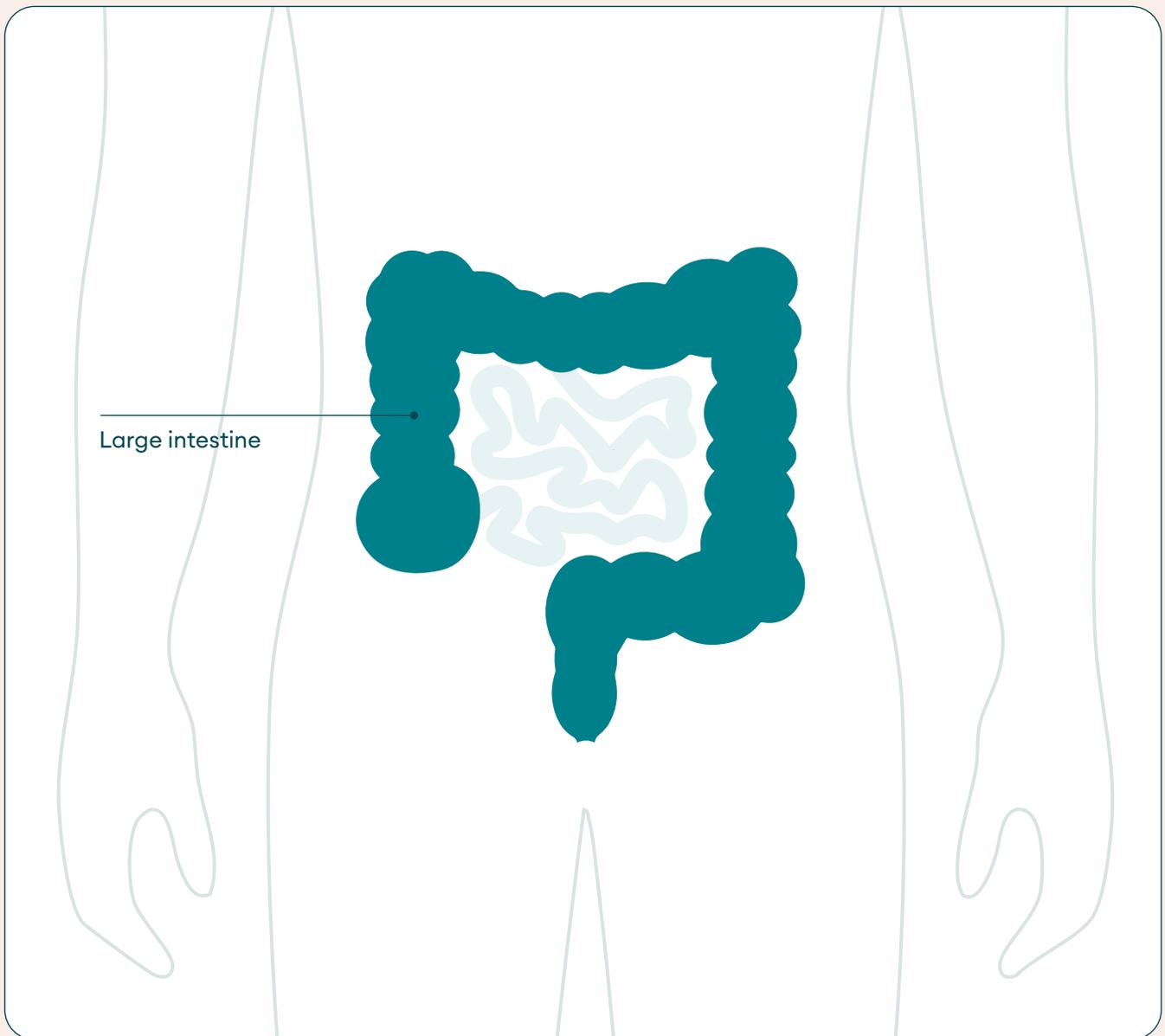
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Inflammation may involve the entire thickness of the intestinal wall

# A focus on ulcerative colitis

Ulcerative colitis (UC) is only found in the large intestine (colon and rectum)

- In people with UC, after exposure to an environmental trigger, the immune system may mistakenly target the digestive tract, causing inflammation
- The inflammation and ulceration in the large intestine can cause diarrhea, abdominal discomfort, urgency, and blood or mucus in the stool
- With UC, the lining of the affected area of the large intestine (colon and rectum) becomes inflamed, resulting in small sores (ulcers), which may release mucus, pus, and blood



Inflammation can lead to serious damage to the affected area of the large intestine.

When you have ulcerative colitis (UC), your immune system overreacts to substances in the large intestine

With ulcerative colitis, inflammation in the large intestine may occur as follows:

1

**ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS TRIGGER AN IMMUNE RESPONSE**

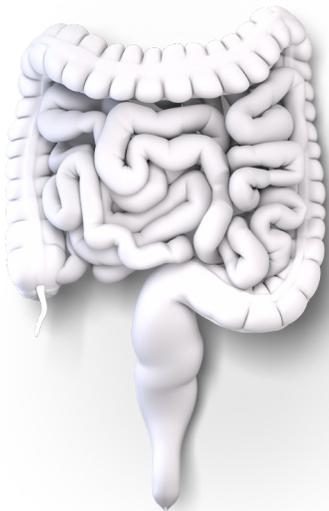
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**YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM BECOMES ACTIVATED WHEN IT SHOULD NOT BE**

3

**INFLAMMATION OCCURS AND PERSISTS**

Intestines **without** inflammation



Healthy intestines

Intestines **with** inflammation



In UC, inflammation typically starts at the rectum and moves continuously up through the colon

The combination of inflammation and sores, or ulcerations, in the large intestine can cause various symptoms, including abdominal pain (or stomach pain), bowel urgency, and blood or mucus in the stool.

# Severity and progression

There is no single test to assess and monitor UC progression. Different clinical measures, how your symptoms impact your life, along with complications of the disease and of therapy will factor into how your healthcare provider makes an assessment related to your disease severity and progression. See the table below for more information on the levels of severity.

	Remission	Mild	Moderate-severe	Fulminant
🗑️ Number of stools per day	Stools are formed	Less than 4	More than 6	More than 10
🩸 Blood in stools	None	Sometimes	Frequent	Continuous
🚽 Urgent need to go to the bathroom	None	Occasional	Often	Continuous

There are other things that help care teams determine the severity of your UC. That information can typically be found by using a combination of testing and imaging. More information about these can be found on the following page.

**Ulcerative colitis is a chronic illness characterized by recurring inflammation that results in various symptoms.**

Even if your symptoms improve while taking corticosteroids (steroids), your disease may still progress. That’s why it’s important to monitor your disease with your care team.

# How is ulcerative colitis (UC) monitored?

Endoscopies, such as a colonoscopy, are used to monitor disease activity. Blood and stool tests are also typically used to monitor activity. Below are some common monitoring tests and procedures that your healthcare provider may order.



## Endoscopic procedures

### Colonoscopy

This procedure gives an inside look of your entire colon using a tiny tube that has a camera on the end.

### Flexible sigmoidoscopy

This procedure uses a tiny tube that has a camera on the end to examine your rectum and sigmoid colon, which is the last part of your colon.



## Imaging tests

Imaging can show the extent and severity of inflammation, as well as provide information about any other problems the disease may be causing.

### X-ray

An X-ray of your abdomen can help assess different issues in your digestive system.

### Computerized tomography (CT) scan

A CT scan uses X-rays along with a computer to create detailed images of your gut and surrounding areas.

### Magnetic resonance imaging (MRI)

An MRI uses a magnetic field and radio waves to create images of your gut and surrounding areas without any exposure to radiation.



## Blood tests

Blood samples are a useful way for healthcare providers to learn more about what's going on in the body.

### C-reactive protein (CRP)

A type of protein that can be found in the blood. If there are higher levels of this protein, it means there is inflammation occurring in the body.

### Erythrocyte sedimentation rate (ESR)

This test is used to find out if there is inflammation in the body based on how quickly red blood cells settle in a test tube.

### Complete blood count (CBC)

This test measures your red and white blood cells, as well as hematocrit, hemoglobin, and platelets.



## Stool test

This may be useful in allowing healthcare providers to determine the level of inflammation in the digestive tract.

### Fecal calprotectin

Fecal calprotectin levels can be used as a marker to detect inflammation in the intestine.

Managing ulcerative colitis (UC) looks different for everyone. Your care team can help you create a plan that may include medications, nutrition, exercise, and other lifestyle strategies that work best for you.

# Treatments

Below are some available prescription treatment options for UC. Be sure to talk with your healthcare provider about your condition and symptoms that are bothering you. This could help when considering a management plan that's right for you.

## 5-aminosalicylic acids (5-ASAs)

A type of drug that reduces inflammation in the lining of the gut.

## Corticosteroids (steroids)

A type of drug that works quickly to lower the activity of the immune system and decrease inflammation. They are usually only used for a short time because of their side effects.

They're often used as a "bridge" until maintenance treatments can reach full effect.

## Immunomodulators

A type of drug that suppresses the immune system's ability to cause ongoing inflammation. They can take several months to improve symptoms.

## Anti-integrins

Anti-integrins block inflammation-causing white blood cells from entering tissues throughout your body.

⊠ **Biologic**

## Anti-TNFs

A type of medicine that blocks tumor necrosis factor (TNF) in the body to reduce inflammation in the intestine as well as other organs and tissues.

⊠ **Biologic**

## Interleukin inhibitors

These medicines target and attach to proteins called interleukins, which play a role in the gut, as well as other organ and tissue inflammation.

⊠ **Biologic**

## JAK inhibitors

JAK inhibitors target proteins called Janus kinases (JAKs), which play a role in activating the body's immune response. This results in reducing the activity of the immune system, which helps decrease inflammation.

⊠ **Synthetic small molecule**

## S1P (sphingosine-1-phosphate) receptor modulators

This type of medicine reduces the body's immune response by blocking immune cells from leaving lymph nodes and moving into the bloodstream, thereby reducing the immune response.

⊠ **Synthetic small molecule**

Each treatment option comes with its benefits and potential risks, and depends on your individual situation.

### ⊠ **Synthetic small molecule**

Synthetic small molecule drugs can reduce inflammation in the intestines by targeting immune-system pathways. These are oral medications, which means you take them by mouth.

### ⊠ **Biologic**

Biologics are medicines made from living cells that are given by an injection or an infusion (a needle placed in your vein). They target proteins in the body that may be involved with the inflammation that occurs in IBD.

# Shared decision-making

Your experience with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) is unique to you. So, when it comes to making decisions around your care, your voice is an essential part of the process. Work with your care team to understand the potential benefits and risks of different options. Ask questions and share your preferences and values with them. Shared decision-making can help you feel more informed, supported, and empowered. Visit [LivingwithIBD.com](https://www.livingwithibd.com) for tips and ways to start the conversation with your care team.



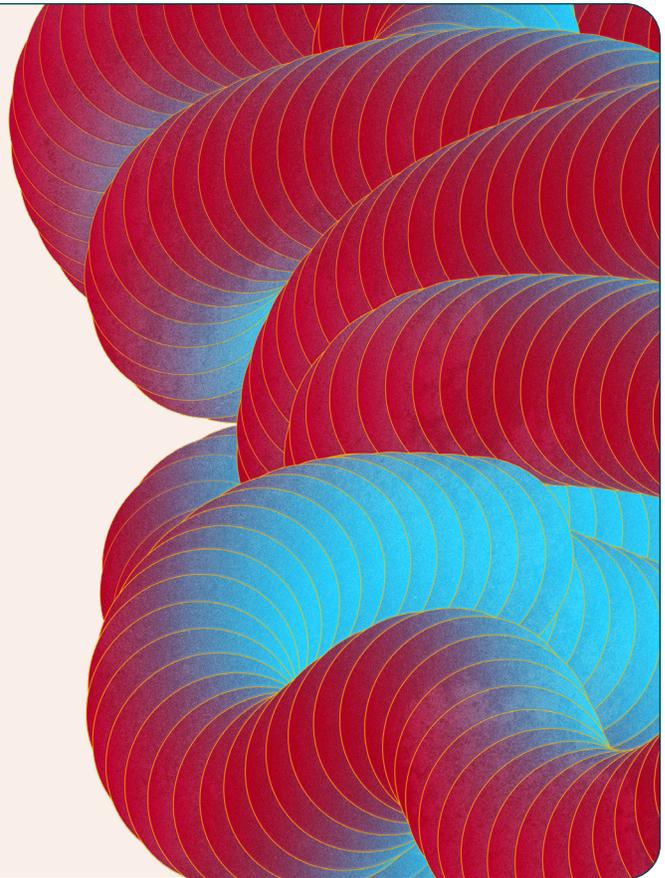


## Living with IBD Patient Mentor Program

**Talk to someone with ulcerative colitis who can share their experiences on their IBD journey**

If you've been recently diagnosed, it could help to talk to someone with experience and know-how of what life can be like with IBD. Hear about their experiences. Living with IBD Patient Mentors are here to help you learn more about Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, with phone-based support at a time that works with your schedule.

[➤ Connect with a mentor](#)



## Living with IBD website

Living with IBD is a site that goes beyond definitions and charts and into the experiences of people living with IBD. Everyone's journey is unique, and this site can shed some light on how to navigate life with IBD.

[➤ Explore the site](#)



## My IBD Symptom Tracker

Track your symptoms and appointments. Get medication reminders. Find bathrooms when and where you need them. My IBD Symptom Tracker is all about getting you the resources you need.

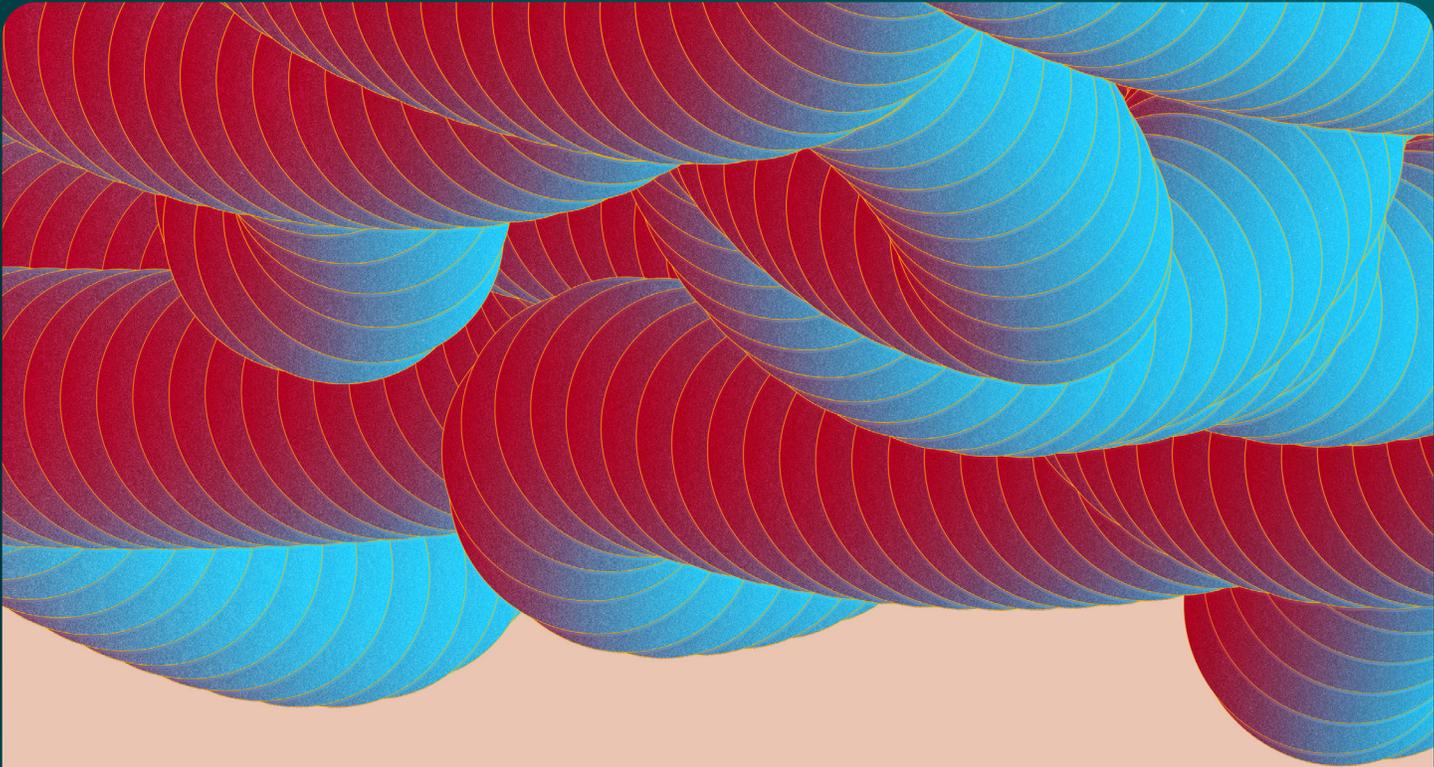
[📱 Download on the App Store](#)

[▶ Get it on Google Play](#)

“When I was faced with my diagnosis, I decided that I didn’t want to lose time. I wanted to make the most of everything I’ve got.”

**Shari** Real patient with ulcerative colitis





# Seeking treatment early and monitoring ulcerative colitis is important

Continue your journey at [LivingwithIBD.com](https://LivingwithIBD.com)

