

captured 9/10/13

Patient Care **Health Information**



For Medical Professionals Research Education

Request an Appointment Find a Doctor Find a Job

Log in to Patient Account Give to Mayo Clinic

Diseases and Conditions

Symptoms

Drugs and Supplements

Tests and Procedures

Healthy Lifestyle

First Aid

Home Diseases and Conditions Ulcerative colitis Basics Definition

Ulcerative colitis

Text Size:

Basics In-Depth Multimedia Expert Answers Resources

Advertisement

Share on:

Print Reprints

Definition

[Symptoms](#)

[Causes](#)

[Risk factors](#)

[Complications](#)

[Preparing for your appointment](#)

[Tests and diagnosis](#)

[Treatments and drugs](#)

[Lifestyle and home remedies](#)

[Alternative medicine](#)

[Coping and support](#)

Definition

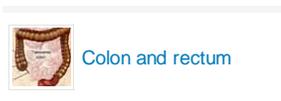
By Mayo Clinic staff

Ulcerative colitis (UL-sur-uh-tiv koe-LIE-tis) is an inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) that causes long-lasting inflammation in part of your digestive tract.

Like Crohn's disease, another common IBD, ulcerative colitis can be debilitating and sometimes can lead to life-threatening complications. Because ulcerative colitis is a chronic condition, symptoms usually develop over time, rather than suddenly.

Ulcerative colitis usually affects only the innermost lining of your large intestine (colon) and rectum. It occurs only through continuous stretches of your colon, unlike Crohn's disease, which occurs anywhere in the digestive tract and often spreads deeply into the affected tissues.

There's no known cure for ulcerative colitis, but therapies are available that may dramatically reduce the signs and symptoms of ulcerative colitis and even bring about a long-term remission.



Colon and rectum

Digestive Health

Subscribe to our **Digestive Health** e-newsletter to stay up to date on digestive health topics.

[Sign up now](#)

Mayo Clinic Store

Check out these best-sellers and special offers on books and newsletters from Mayo Clinic.

[Try Mayo Clinic Health Letter FREE!](#)

[Mayo Clinic Book of Alternative Medicine](#)

[Control fibromyalgia with a three-step action plan](#)

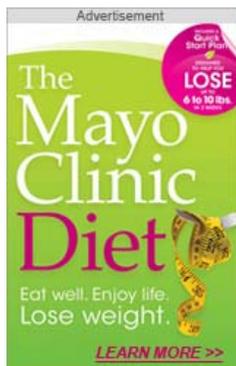
[NEW! Mayo Clinic on Alzheimer's Disease](#)

The Mayo Clinic Diet — Eat well. Enjoy life. Lose weight.

Mayo Clinic is a not-for-profit organization and proceeds from Web advertising help support our mission. Mayo Clinic does not endorse any of the non-Mayo products and services advertised.

[Advertising and sponsorship policy](#)

[Advertising and sponsorship opportunities](#)



Free E-newsletter

Subscribe to Housecall

Our weekly general interest e-newsletter keeps you up to date on a wide variety of health topics.

[Sign up now](#)

[RSS Feeds](#)

Mayo Clinic products and services

[Ulcerative colitis treatment at Mayo Clinic](#)

[Inflammatory bowel disease treatment at Mayo Clinic](#)

[Book: Mayo Clinic on Digestive Health](#)

[Newsletter: Mayo Clinic Health Letter](#)

[Give today to find cures for tomorrow](#)

See Also

[Inflammatory bowel disease \(IBD\)](#)

[References](#)

Oct. 10, 2012

DS00598

© 1998-2013 Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research (MFMER). All rights reserved. A single copy of these materials may be reprinted for noncommercial personal use only. "Mayo," "Mayo Clinic," "MayoClinic.com," "EmbodyHealth," "Enhance your life," and the triple-shield Mayo Clinic logo are trademarks of Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research.

About this site	Site help	Contact us	E-newsletter
Blogs	Podcasts	Slide shows	Videos
Site map	Reprint permissions		Interest-Based Ads

Find Mayo Clinic on

[Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) [YouTube](#)

[Privacy policy \(Updated July 13, 2013\)](#) [Terms and conditions of use policy \(Updated July 13, 2013\)](#)

LEGAL CONDITIONS AND TERMS OF USE APPLICABLE TO ALL USERS OF THIS SITE. ANY USE OF THIS SITE CONSTITUTES YOUR AGREEMENT TO THESE TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF USE.

© 1998-2013 Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research. All rights reserved.



We comply with the HONcode standard for trustworthy health information: verify here.