

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 Symptoms

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

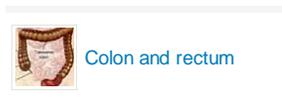
Coping and support

Symptoms

By Mayo Clinic staff

Ulcerative colitis symptoms can vary, depending on the severity of inflammation and where it occurs. For these reasons, doctors often classify ulcerative colitis according to its location.

Here are the signs and symptoms that may accompany ulcerative colitis, depending on its classification:



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](#)

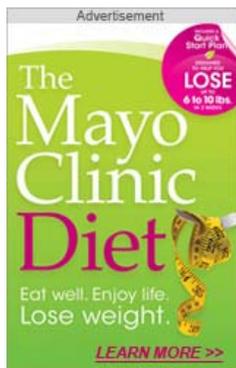
[NEW! Mayo Clinic on Alzheimer's Disease](#)

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](#)

Ulcerative proctitis. In this form of ulcerative colitis, inflammation is confined to the area closest to the anus (rectum), and for some people, rectal bleeding may be the only sign of the disease. Others may have rectal pain and a feeling of urgency. This form of ulcerative colitis tends to be the mildest.

Proctosigmoiditis. This form involves the rectum and the lower end of the colon, known as the sigmoid colon. Bloody diarrhea, abdominal cramps and pain, and an inability to move the bowels in spite of the urge to do so (tenesmus) are common problems associated with this form of the disease.

Left-sided colitis. As the name suggests, inflammation extends from the rectum up through the sigmoid and descending colon, which are located in the upper left part of the abdomen. Signs and symptoms include bloody diarrhea, abdominal cramping and pain on the left side, and unintended weight loss.

Pancolitis. Affecting more than the left colon and often the entire colon, pancolitis causes bouts of bloody diarrhea that may be severe, abdominal cramps and pain, fatigue, and significant weight loss.

Fulminant colitis. This rare, life-threatening form of colitis affects the entire colon and causes severe pain, profuse diarrhea and, sometimes, dehydration and shock. People with fulminant colitis are at risk of serious complications, including colon rupture and toxic megacolon, a condition that causes the colon to rapidly expand.

The course of ulcerative colitis varies, with periods of acute illness often alternating with periods of remission. But over time, the severity of the disease usually remains the same. Most people with a milder condition, such as ulcerative proctitis, won't go on to develop more-severe signs and symptoms.

When to see a doctor

See your doctor if you experience a persistent change in your bowel habits or if you have any of the signs and symptoms of ulcerative colitis, such as:

Abdominal pain

Blood in your stool

Ongoing bouts of diarrhea that don't respond to over-the-counter (OTC) medications

An unexplained fever lasting more than a day or two

Although ulcerative colitis usually isn't fatal, it's a serious disease that, in some cases, may cause life-threatening complications.

Definition

[Causes](#)

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

[Symptom Checker](#)

[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](#).