

# HELPING A LOVED ONE COPE WITH INFLAMMATORY BOWEL DISEASE (IBD)

Caregivers, including a spouse, parent, neighbor and others, can contribute to an IBD patient's well-being and play a significant role as a part of his/her health care team.

- IBD is the name given to a group of inflammatory diseases of the gastrointestinal (GI) tract<sup>1</sup>
- The 2 major types of IBD are Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis<sup>2</sup>
- IBD is different than irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)<sup>2</sup>
- IBD is a lifelong condition<sup>1</sup>
- Most patients with IBD can continue to perform daily activities. However, at times, the pain and symptoms of IBD can limit what the patient can do for himself/herself<sup>3</sup>
- Your loved one with IBD may need your help with some daily activities when symptoms of IBD flare up
- You can help your loved one cope with IBD

## Tips for Helping a Loved One Cope With IBD

- Learn as much as you can about IBD
- Listen to your loved one who has IBD. Allow him/her to share as much or as little as he/she is comfortable sharing
- Offer to go with your loved one to doctor's appointments or medical procedures
- Encourage your loved one to follow the dietary plan developed with his/her nutritionist
- Help your loved one locate restrooms in public places such as restaurants, shopping areas, or on public transportation
- Join a support group. These groups are for IBD patients, family, and friends
- Partner with your loved one to reduce stress. Stress has negative effects on everyone
- Offer to accompany your loved one to a relaxing activity, or make it possible for him/her to have some meditation or rest time

**Remember, loved ones play an important role in the support and care of IBD patients.**



## Resources

- ▶ **Crohn's & Colitis Foundation**  
<http://www.crohnscolitisfoundation.org/>
- ▶ **American Gastroenterological Association**  
<http://www.gastro.org/patient-care>
- ▶ **National Caregivers Library**  
<http://www.caregiverslibrary.org/quick-tools/tools-for-caregivers-and-employers>
- ▶ **American Psychological Association—Caregiving Facts**  
<https://www.apa.org/pi/about/publications/caregivers/faq>
- ▶ **Lotsa Helping Hands**  
<http://www.lotsahelpinghands.com>

**References:** **1.** Crohn's & Colitis Foundation. The facts about inflammatory bowel diseases. November 2014. <http://www.crohnscolitisfoundation.org/assets/pdfs/updatedibdifactbook.pdf>. Accessed August 2, 2017. **2.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. What is inflammatory bowel disease (IBD)? Updated September 18, 2014. <http://www.cdc.gov/ibd/what-is-ibd.htm>. Accessed August 2, 2017. **3.** MayoClinic.org. Diseases and conditions: inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/inflammatory-bowel-disease/basics/definition/con-20034908?p=1>. Updated February 18, 2015. Accessed August 2, 2017.