



# IBD

## What to do when you have a flare

Inflammatory bowel disease is a chronic condition. Many patients experience periods of remission, or feeling well, and have few or no symptoms, or periods where the disease symptoms are very active. These active periods are called flares.

Flare symptoms may range from mild to severe and are often similar to the symptoms that children experience when first diagnosed with IBD. While some symptoms strongly suggest a flare, others may be signs of a virus or other illness instead.

Some common symptoms are listed below.

Although flares may occur for no obvious reason, certain factors can trigger flares in some people. Triggers may include stress, certain foods, smoking or medications such as ibuprofen. Your child's gastroenterologist can help you understand more about IBD flares.

### POSSIBLE SYMPTOMS

- Diarrhea that persists
- Urgent bowel movements
- Blood in the stool or black, tar-like stools
- Painful stomach cramps for multiple days
- Fatigue, involuntary weight loss, lack of appetite
- Ongoing fever that's not tied to a viral illness like the flu
- Nausea and vomiting that persists for multiple days
- Unexplained mouth ulcers
- Joint pain and swelling
- Eye inflammation
- Painful bumps on the arms and/or legs that are coin-sized and either purple or red

### WHAT TO DO

Contact your child's gastroenterologist for an evaluation. They may need to do some testing to see what is causing the symptoms to return and locate the area of inflammation. Oftentimes a flare-up is a sign that a new treatment may be needed, such as a change in medication.

