

WHAT IS ULCERATIVE COLITIS?

Ulcerative colitis is more likely to develop in people between the ages of 15 and 30.

Ulcerative colitis is a type of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) characterized by inflammation and the formation of ulcers in the digestive tract. The condition primarily affects the inner lining of the colon and rectum. Typically, symptoms of ulcerative colitis gradually manifest over time rather than appearing suddenly. The cause of the disease is unknown, but most people with the condition have issues with their immune system.

01 | Signs and Symptoms

Symptoms for ulcerative colitis can differ depending on the severity of the inflammation. Common symptoms that may appear are:

- Diarrhea
- Abdominal pain and cramping
- Rectal bleeding and pain
- Inability to defecate despite urgency
- Weight loss
- Fatigue
- Fever

02 | Diagnosis

Some of the tests and procedures used to diagnose and detect ulcerative colitis include:

- **Blood test** — This test can indicate anemia, potentially signaling colon or rectal bleeding. Blood tests help eliminate other possible causes of symptoms.
- **Stool tests** — This test can reveal if there are signs of infection, parasites and inflammation.
- **Endoscopy of the large intestine** — This procedure examines the colon and collects tissue samples for a biopsy.

03 | Treatments

The main goal of treatment is to maintain remission during a flare-up using medication or surgery. Health professionals will prescribe medications that calm inflammation in the large intestine, relieving some symptoms. If medications are ineffective, surgery may be considered. Approximately 30% of individuals diagnosed with ulcerative colitis will require surgery at some point.

For more information on ulcerative colitis and supportive resources, please visit [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org).

Did You Know?

Having a direct family member who has ulcerative colitis increases your chances of also being diagnosed with it.

References

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/ulcerative-colitis/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20353331>

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/10351-ulcerative-colitis#diagnosis-and-tests>

<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/ulcerative-colitis/definition-facts>