



# Fact Sheet

## Inflammatory Bowel Disease

- Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) includes two similar yet distinct conditions called Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.
- IBD is a chronic and debilitating disease affecting more than 200,000 Canadian men, women and children. Just over half this number have Crohn's disease and the rest have ulcerative colitis. One in every 160 Canadians has IBD.
- Canada has among the highest incidence and prevalence rates of Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis in the world.
- Most people are diagnosed before the age of 30.
- Over 9,200 new cases are diagnosed every year.
- These diseases affect the digestive system and cause the intestinal tissue to become inflamed, form sores and bleed easily. Symptoms include abdominal pain, cramping, fatigue and diarrhea.
- Economic costs for IBD are conservatively estimated at 1.8 billion per year in Canada in 2008.
- More research is needed to find the causes of, and cure(s) for, IBD.

### Crohn's Disease

- Crohn's disease can affect any part of the gastrointestinal tract, from the mouth to the anus. Patches of inflammation occur, leaving healthy tissue between the diseased areas. The inflammation can extend through several layers of affected tissue.
- Crohn's disease cannot be cured by drugs or surgery, although either or both can help relieve symptoms.

### Ulcerative Colitis

- Ulcerative Colitis affects only the inner layer of the colon, or large bowel. It always starts in the rectum and may extend as a continuous inflammation from there into the rest of the colon.
- It can be completely eliminated by surgically removing part or parts of the colon. After such surgery, waste material may have to be stored and expelled through an external appliance (colostomy bag).

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