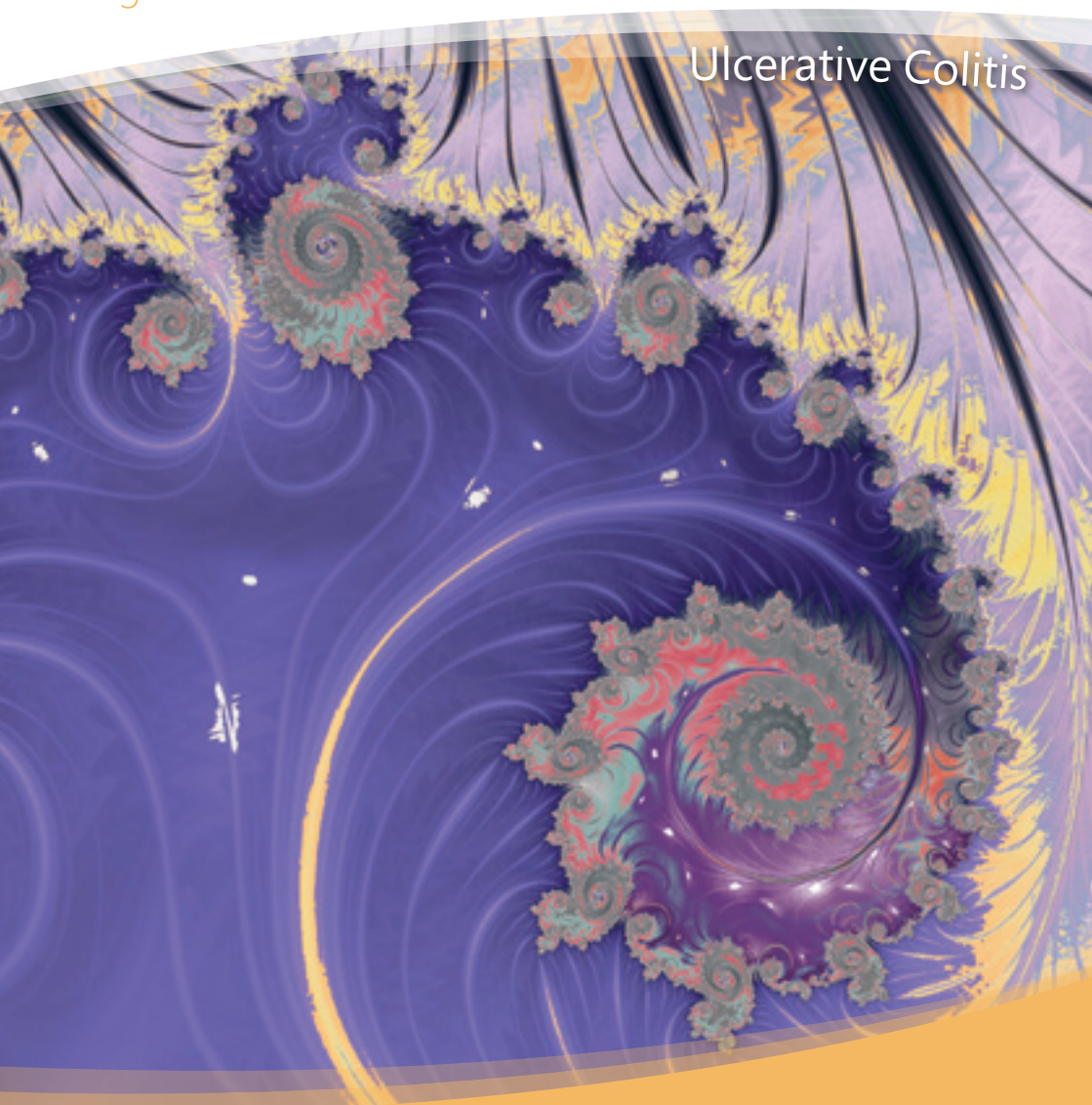


Patient information

English

Englisch

Ulcerative Colitis



ULCERATIVE COLITIS
Explained simply



*Ulcerative Colitis is a type of
Inflammatory **Bowel Diseases** (= **IBD**).*

FACTS ABOUT ULCERATIVE COLITIS

- It usually starts **between the ages of 15 and 30**.
- It affects about the **same number** of women and men.
- **It causes** inflammation of the digestive tract, which can lead to abdominal pain, severe diarrhea, fatigue, weight loss and blood or mucus in the stool.
- The course of the disease is usually **in episodes**: Symptoms alternate with periods without symptoms.
- Its cause is not exactly known. **Various factors** are probably involved, such as genetic predisposition, an increased immune reaction and environmental influences.
- The disease is not contagious.

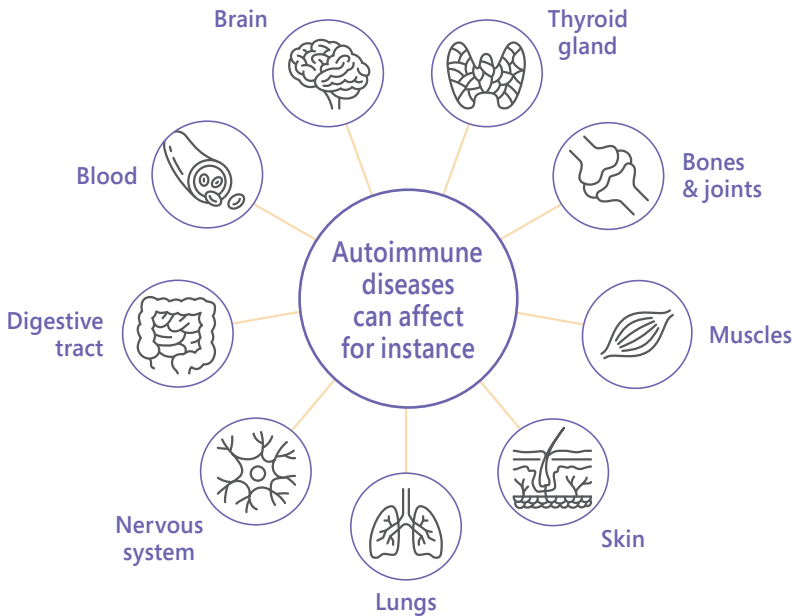
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT ULCERATIVE COLITIS

What is ulcerative colitis?¹

Ulcerative colitis is an inflammation of the large intestine. It is a long-time condition, which means it cannot be cured, but it is easily treatable. It usually progresses in episodes, i.e. flare ups alternate with periods without symptoms. Ulcerative colitis is an autoimmune disease.

What is an autoimmune disease?²

Autoimmune diseases are chronic inflammatory processes. Worldwide, approximately 5–8% of the population are currently affected by about 80–100 different autoimmune diseases. They are the third most common group of diseases after cardiovascular diseases and tumours.



What symptoms can ulcerative colitis cause?¹

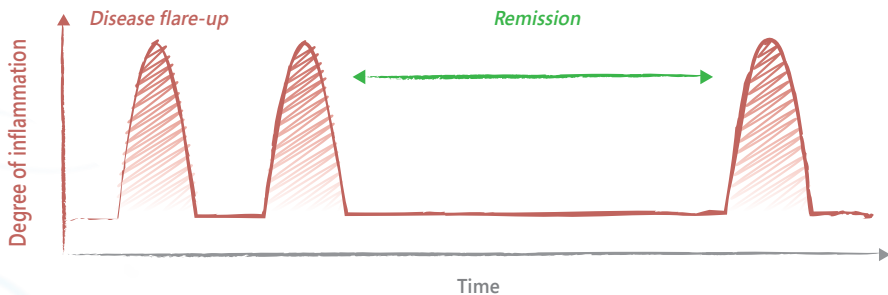
- diarrhea (with blood and mucus)
- abdominal pain
- weight loss
- fever
- fatigue
- frequent stools
- urgency to defecate

What diseases can accompany ulcerative colitis?

- inflammation of the joints
- skin changes
- inflammation of the eyes
- loss of bone density
- inflammation of the liver or bile ducts

What is the course of ulcerative colitis?³

Ulcerative colitis is characterised by episodes. If an episode is very severe, hospitalisation may be necessary. In the symptom-free phase, normal everyday life is often possible. In remission, the mucous membrane of the colon recovers and symptoms recede.



What are the goals of ulcerative colitis treatment?⁴

- The complete and permanent healing of the inflamed intestinal mucosa (= remission).
- A life free of symptoms for as long as possible, during which you can pursue your daily activities without any problems.

What treatment options are available for ulcerative colitis?^{4,5}

It is important that your ulcerative colitis is treated as early as possible. Your doctor may consider a variety of medications, for example:

- **Aminosalicylates** (also called 5-ASA preparations) can reduce inflammation.
- **Cortisone** can be used during episodes and relieve symptoms, but should not be used on long-term in treatment.
- **Biologics** are medicines that are given under the skin (= subcutaneously) or directly into the blood vessels (= intravenously). They interrupt the disease mechanism and inhibit the inflammation in the body.
- **Immunosuppressants** can block the immune system's response and thus slow down the disease's course.

Do I have to have surgery?⁴

Surgery may be needed for ulcerative colitis e.g. in the following cases:

- when complications occur
- in the event of severe disease progression
- when medication is no longer effective enough



URGENT QUESTIONS FROM EVERYDAY LIFE

Is ulcerative colitis hereditary?^{6,9}

The genetic predisposition to develop an autoimmune disease is hereditary. It is not uncommon for ulcerative colitis patients to have a genetic predisposition to the disease.

Will I be able to have a child?⁷

Yes. Please discuss your wish to have a child with your doctor in advance and inform your gynaecologist that you have ulcerative colitis. Under no circumstances should you discontinue therapy on your own.

Is ulcerative colitis contagious?⁸

No.

Can I be vaccinated?

Yes – depending on your medication. Please discuss next steps with your doctor.

Can I travel?⁹

Yes. If you have few or no symptoms (e.g. between episodes), you can also travel with ulcerative colitis. Discuss with your doctor what medication you should take with you in your first-aid kit. Ask for a travel brochure containing tips on travelling with the disease.

What should I do about anxiety or despair?

You are not alone – many patients with ulcerative colitis experience anxiety, and depression as well. Be sure to discuss this with your doctor.

Will the disease go away on its own?

No. Ulcerative colitis is an autoimmune disease that occurs in episodes and usually needs treatment, otherwise the disease will get worse. Even symptom-free phases do not mean that the disease is cured forever.

Does smoking affect ulcerative colitis?¹⁰

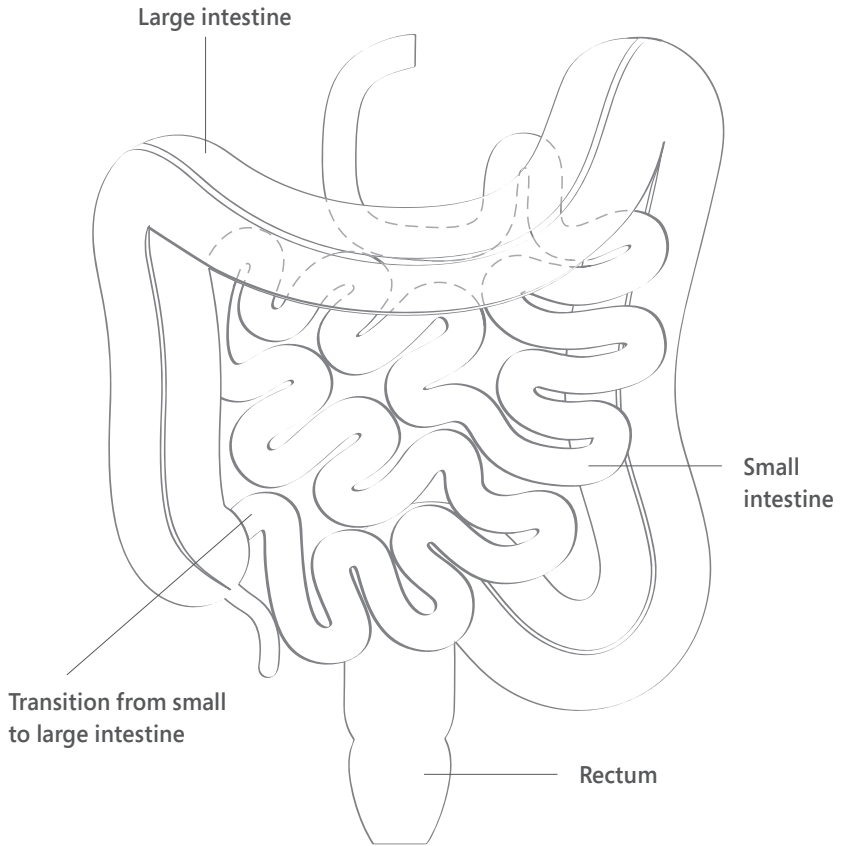
Smoking is unlikely to affect the course of ulcerative colitis.¹¹ However, smoking increases the risk of many cancers. For this reason, you should definitely give up smoking.

How does ulcerative colitis affect my diet and my overall health?^{3,4}

Eat what tastes good and is agreeable. A healthy and balanced mixed diet is usually well tolerated during symptom-free phases. If a food does not agree with you, do not eat it. If episodes occur, it may be necessary to adjust your diet, which should be discussed with your doctor.

What can I do myself to positively affect the course of the disease?³⁻⁵

- If you smoke, it is important that you stop. There are several services available for helping you to quit smoking.
- Follow your doctor's dietary recommendations.
- Enjoy a healthy lifestyle by avoiding stress, exercising and balancing rest and active times.
- Go for regular check-ups – even during periods when you are feeling well.



THE LITTLE DICTIONARY

ulcerative colitis inflammation of the large intestine including the formation of an ulcer.

Colon large intestine

-itis if a word ends with “-itis”, it means that there is an inflammation

ulcerosa comes from the Latin term “Ulcus” = ulcer

fissure small tear

remission in ulcerative colitis → healing of the intestinal mucosa

stenosis narrowing

stricture particularly narrow spot (e.g. in the intestine)

Your doctor can help you decide on the next steps in the treatment of your ulcerative colitis.

If you have questions about ulcerative colitis or drug treatment options, make an appointment with your doctor as soon as possible.

Information in this brochure has been taken from the following sources, which also contain additional explanations:

1. <https://www.dccv.de/betroffene-angehoerige/medizinische-grundlagen/was-ist-colitis-ulcerosa> (last retrieved on 09/08/2021)
2. <https://www.imd-berlin.de/spezielle-kompetenzen/autoimmunshyerkrankungen.html> (last retrieved on 16/08/2021)
3. <https://innovall.de/ratgeber/ced/colitis-ulcerosa> (last retrieved on 16/08/2021)
4. <https://www.gesundheit.gv.at/krankheiten/verdaeuung/darmerkrankungen/ursachen-symptome> (last retrieved on 29/07/2021)
5. <https://www.minimed.at/medizinische-themen/stoffwechsel-verdaeuung/colitis-ulcerosa> (last retrieved on 10/08/2021)
6. Degenhardt et al.; Genetik des Morbus Crohn und der Colitis ulcerosa; Der Gastroenterologe DOI 10.1007/s11377-016-0127-z
7. <https://ced-kompass.at/dein-leben-mit-ced/partnerschaft/familienplanung> (last retrieved on 10/08/2021)
8. <https://www.hilfefuermich.de/ist-colitis-ulcerosa-ansteckend> (last retrieved on 16/08/2021)
9. <https://www.oemccv.at/krankheitsbilder-ced> (last retrieved on 02/08/2021)
10. <https://www.ced-trotzdem-ich.de/unterstuetzung-erhalten/news/rauchen-mit-ced-morbus-crohn> (last retrieved on 16/08/2021)
11. Blackwell et al.; The impact of smoking and smoking cessation on disease outcomes in ulcerative colitis: a nationwide population-based study; Aliment Pharmacol Ther. 2019;00:1–12

Who can I turn to?

CED Kompass – A service of the ÖMCCV

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ÖMCCV (Austrian Morbus Crohn – Colitis Ulcerosa Association)

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Information regarding effects and possible adverse reactions can be obtained from the package leaflet and your doctor or pharmacist.

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