

## Medical terms used in IBD

### Introduction

You are likely to hear and read about many new medical terms when you are diagnosed with Ulcerative Colitis or Crohn's Disease. Both conditions come under the heading of Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD). This is because the intestines (also called bowel) become inflamed and ulcerated.

Crohn's Disease is named after an American gastroenterologist who first described the condition in 1932. It can affect any part of the digestive system from the mouth to the anus. The lining and deep layers of the bowel wall may be affected.

Ulcerative Colitis affects the inner lining of the large bowel.

You may notice 'itis' on the end of a number of words: it means inflammation. So, for example, 'colitis' is inflammation of the colon. This means that when Crohn's affects the colon it is called Crohn's Colitis. Ulcerative Colitis that affects only the rectum is called proctitis.

When the inflammation affects any part of the small intestine it can be called 'enteritis'. This comes from the Greek word 'enteron' meaning intestine. Inflammation in the ileum (the lower part of the small intestine) is sometimes called ileitis.

The following list of definitions of medical terms and diagram of the gastrointestinal tract at the end may help you:

**abscess** - a sore containing pus which generally develops in response to infection and becomes swollen and painful. In people with Crohn's, abscesses may form in the abdominal cavity or in the anal and rectal area.

**acute (illness)** – beginning suddenly and often severe, but lasting a short time.

**acid reflux** - a 'burning' sensation usually felt in the chest when stomach acid flows back up into the oesophagus. Commonly called heartburn.

**adalimumab (Humira)** – see anti-TNF alpha

**adhesion** – bands of scar tissue that are usually the result of surgery, and that stick the area of surgery to another surface such as a section of intestine.

**aetiology** - cause.

**aminosalicylic acid or 5-ASA** – a type of drug used to reduce inflammation and decrease the risk of relapse in IBD, and possibly of cancer. Types include balsalazide, mesalazine, olsalazine and sulphasalazine

**anaemia** - reduced numbers of red blood cells and/or levels of haemoglobin. In IBD it can be due to blood loss and/or poor intake or absorption of vitamins and iron, which can cause tiredness and shortness of breath.

**anal fissure** – a crack or split in the skin around the anus, which is often painful and may cause bleeding. In Crohn's Disease it may become deeper and may be referred to as an 'anal ulcer'.

**anal sphincter** - a ring of muscle surrounding the anal canal, controlling the opening and closing of the anus.

**analgesic** – a type of drug used to relieve pain, such as paracetamol. Commonly called a painkiller.

**anastomosis** - the surgical joining of two ends of healthy bowel, after a surgeon has cut out a diseased part of bowel (resection).

**ankylosing spondylitis** - a chronic inflammatory disease of the spine and adjacent joints which causes pain and

stiffness in the spine, neck, hips and ribcage.

**antibiotics** - drugs used to fight bacterial infections including complications of IBD such as abscesses and fistulae in Crohn's Disease.

**antibodies** – proteins in the blood which destroy or neutralise antigens (see below). Antibodies are produced by white blood cells in response to specific antigens. This production is an important part of the body's immune system.

**antigen** - a substance, usually a protein, which the body's immune system recognises as 'foreign', such as viruses or bacteria. The immune system responds by producing antibodies against the antigen. The reaction between an antigen and an antibody may cause inflammation.

**anti-spasmodic** – a type of drug used to relieve painful spasms in the gut, such as mebeverine (Colofac), hyoscine butylbromide (Buscopan) and alverine citrate (Spasmonal).

**anti-TNF-alpha** – a newer type of drug, called a biologic, such as infliximab and adalimumab, used for treating severe IBD, especially Crohn's. These drugs work by blocking the effects of TNF-alpha, an inflammatory substance in the blood produced in excessive amounts in IBD.

**anus** - the opening at the lower end of the gastrointestinal tract, at the end of the rectum. The anal canal is a short passage which connects the anus to the rectum.

**appendix** - a narrow tube-like pouch attached to the first part of the large intestine.

**arthralgia** - pains in the joints from arthritis (see below) which can occur with IBD.

**arthritis** - inflammation of a joint causing pain, swelling and stiffness.

**azathioprine (Imuran)** - a drug called an immunosuppressant that is used to treat IBD instead of or in addition to steroids or 5-ASAs. This drug acts slowly and is generally used for years rather than months.

**bacteria** - minute organisms that exist in the environment and in our body. Of the billions of bacteria in the intestines, some, usually harmless, can cause infection when the body's resistance to disease is lowered; others can be helpful, in digestion and in destroying harmful organisms.

**balsalazide (Colazide)** - a 5-ASA drug used for treating IBD in the colon.

**barium enema** – a special type of x-ray used to examine the colon. A white liquid, containing barium, is put into the colon via the anus. It coats the bowel lining to give a better picture.

**barium meal and follow through** - liquid barium is drunk so that a series of x-ray pictures can be taken of the oesophagus, stomach and small intestine as the liquid passes through.

**beclometasone dipropionate (BDP) (Clipper)** – a corticosteroid drug used short-term for up to 4 weeks in combination with a 5-ASA drug to treat Ulcerative Colitis.

**bile** – a thick, bitter, greenish-brown fluid produced by the liver and stored in the gall bladder. It is released into the small intestine to help digest fat.

**biological therapy** – see anti-TNF-alpha.

**biologics** – the newest group of drugs to be used in IBD, which include adalimumab and infliximab. They work with the immune system to block chemicals that cause ongoing inflammation.

**biopsy** - a small piece of tissue taken from the body for examination under a microscope.

**borborygmi** - rumbling sounds in the bowel caused by the movement of air through the intestine. Almost everybody has them whether or not they have IBD, although they can be more obvious in people with Crohn's.

**bowel** - another name for the intestines - the small bowel (duodenum, jejunum and ileum), and the large bowel (colon).

**breath tests** - simple tests which help find abnormalities in the working of the intestines,

such as intolerance of lactose or overgrowth with bacteria.

**budesonide (Entocort/Budenofalk)** - a corticosteroid drug, which can reduce inflammation in the intestine. It has a special formulation designed specifically to release the drug within the ileum. This local action can reduce the side-effects of the drug on other parts of the body. It can be taken orally as capsules or through the rectum by an enema.

**bypass** - a surgical re-routing of the intestine.

**caecum** - the first 10-15 cm of the colon, located in the right lower abdomen.

**capsule endoscopy** – a capsule containing a tiny camera which is swallowed. As it passes through the intestinal tract it takes photographs and transmits these to an external computer. The capsule passes out of the body naturally and is not re-used.

**cholestyramine (Questran)** - a drug used to treat certain types of diarrhoea in Crohn's. It works by absorbing the bile acids produced by the liver, which cause diarrhoea if they reach the colon. This is most likely to happen after surgery to remove the terminal ileum.

**chronic (illness)** - chronic comes from the Greek word for 'ongoing'. This means a chronic illness is ongoing or continuing.

**ciclosporin (Sandimmun/Neoral)** – an immunosuppressant drug used for severe Ulcerative Colitis, usually to help avoid or delay surgery to remove the large bowel.

**ciprofloxacin (Ciproxin)** – an antibiotic which is sometimes used for Crohn's Disease.

**clubbing** - an abnormal curved shaping of the finger nails which affects some people with IBD.

**cobblestoning** - characteristic appearance of the bowel mucosa (lining) seen in Crohn's Disease that looks like 'cobblestones'. It is formed by deep ulceration and swelling of the surrounding tissue.

**codeine phosphate** - a painkilling drug which is also used to help control diarrhoea. It works by reducing the number of contractions in the bowel and thereby reducing the number of stools.

**colectomy** - surgical removal of the colon.

**colitis** - inflammation of the colon.

**colon (the large intestine)** - the colon is the part of the intestine that follows on after the small intestine. The colon consists of the caecum, the ascending (right side) colon, the transverse (top) colon, the descending (left side) colon and the sigmoid colon. This leads to the rectum and the anus. The function of the colon is to absorb water. It is about 1.5 metres long.

**colonoscopy** - an examination of the rectum, colon and last part of the small intestine (terminal ileum) using a lighted, flexible, tube, called a colonoscope, inserted through the anus.

**colostomy** - a surgical operation in which the cut end of the colon is brought through the abdominal wall to create a spout-like opening called a stoma. Waste is then collected in a bag which is fitted over this opening and attached to the skin.

**constipation** - infrequent passing of hard stools.

**continent ileostomy** – an uncommon alternative operation to the more usual ileostomy after a colectomy. It involves creating an internal pouch out of the ileum which will collect the waste. The pouch is emptied regularly with a small tube inserted through an opening in the abdomen. This means there is no need for an external bag.

**corticosteroids** - a group of hormones used as a drug treatment to control IBD. Drugs include prednisolone, budesonide and hydrocortisone.

**Crohn's colitis** – Crohn's Disease in the colon.

**CRP (C-reactive Protein)** – a protein in the blood often measured to check if IBD is active.

**CT scan (computerised tomography)** – a special x-ray test that uses a computer to produce pictures as slices or cross-sections of the body.

**defecation (defaecation)** - the act of passing faeces or stools.

**DEXA (dual energy x-ray absorptiometry) scan** – a scan that measures the density of bones to assess the risk of fractures, due to osteoporosis.

**diarrhoea** – frequent and often urgent passing of loose or watery stools.

**dietitian** – someone who is specially trained and qualified to advise people with medical conditions about a healthy and appropriate diet. All dietitians are registered with the Health Professions Council.

**dilated** - widened.

**distal or left-sided colitis** – inflammation from the rectum, which extends up the left side of the colon, but not into the transverse (top) or right side.

**distension** - an uncomfortable swollen feeling in the abdomen often caused by gas and fluid in the intestine.

**diverticular disease** - a common condition particularly in older people that affects the colon – usually the lower colon. Small bulges or pouches, called diverticula, form in the wall of the bowel. They can become inflamed and infected and this condition is called diverticulitis.

**duodenum** – the first part of the small intestine.

**dysplasia** – a change in the size, shape and pattern of cells of the lining of the colon seen under a microscope, which indicates the possible development of cancer.

**effusion** - collection of fluid within a joint, generally because of inflammation.

**electrolytes** - salts in the blood, such as sodium, potassium and calcium.

**elemental diet** - a specially prepared liquid feed containing all necessary nutrients, which needs no digestion.

**endoscope** – see endoscopy.

**endoscopy** - a general term for the examination of the inside of the body using a flexible lighted tube, called an endoscope, inserted through the mouth or anus. The endoscopist carrying out the examination is a specially trained physician, surgeon or nurse. (See gastroscopy, colonoscopy and sigmoidoscopy.)

**enteral nutrition** – a special liquid food, containing all or partial nutritional needs, taken by mouth or passed into the stomach through a fine flexible tube inserted via the nose (nasogastric tube).

**enteritis** - inflammation of the small intestine.

**enema** - a liquid or foam inserted into the large bowel through the anus, for diagnosis or treatment.

**episcleritis** - the inflammation of the episclera (white of the eye).

**erythema nodosum** - red, tender swellings occasionally seen on the shins and lower legs during a flare-up of IBD. They usually go down when the disease is in remission.

**erythrocytes** – see red blood cells.

**ESR (Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate)** – a blood test used to check if IBD is active.

**exacerbation** - a worsening of symptoms or an increase in the activity of the disease, often referred to as a relapse or a 'flare up'.

**faeces (stools, motions)** - waste matter from digestion passed out through the anus or stoma.

**FBC (Full Blood Count)** – a blood test which measures the haemoglobin, white cell count and platelet count.

**febrile** - running a fever, having a temperature.

**ferritin** - a blood test which measures iron levels in the body. A low level indicates the need for iron treatment (see anaemia).

**fissure** - a crack or split in the skin, usually in the area around the anus.

**fistula** - an abnormal channel between two loops of intestine, or between the intestine and another organ, or between the intestine and the skin, or the rectum and the skin.

**'flare-up'** – see relapse and exacerbation.

**flatus** - gas from the stomach or bowels let out through the rectum or stoma, more commonly known as 'wind' or 'fart'.

**folic acid or folate** - a vitamin that is essential for forming red blood cells, especially during times of growth and cell division, such as infancy and pregnancy. A lack of this vitamin can result from a poor diet or poor absorption by the small intestine. It may also be taken with methotrexate therapy to help reduce possible side effects. Sometimes sulphasalazine treatment can reduce the body's ability to absorb folic acid, but oral supplements can usually correct this.

**fulminant colitis** – a very intense and severe form of colitis that can happen suddenly.

**gastroenterologist** - a doctor specially trained in the diagnosis and treatment of intestinal disorders, including Crohn's Disease and Ulcerative Colitis.

**gastroscopy** – an examination of the gullet, stomach and duodenum, using a slim flexible lighted tube, called a gastroscope, inserted through the mouth.

**generic medicine** – the official medical name for the active ingredient of a medicine.

**granuloma, granulomata** – a round mass of non-cancerous inflammatory cells in the intestine wall of people with Crohn's Disease seen under the microscope when a pathologist examines a biopsy or an operation specimen.

**gullet or oesophagus** - tube from the throat to the stomach down which food passes.

**gut** - another word for intestine or bowel.

**haemoglobin** – a substance in the red blood cells which carries oxygen around the body.

**haemorrhoids** -.swollen veins in or around the anus which bleed easily and can become painful. Commonly known as piles.

**heartburn** - see acid reflux.

**hepatic flexure** – the part of the colon where the ascending and transverse colon meet (near the liver).

**histopathologist** - a doctor who specialises in examining tissues under a microscope.

**hydrocortisone** - a corticosteroid drug, which reduces inflammation, injected directly into a vein or given as a foam enema..

**IBD, Ibd** - Inflammatory Bowel Disease.

**ileitis** - inflammation of the ileum. A term used for Crohn's Disease of the ileum.

**ileum** - the lower part of the small intestine, which joins the colon at the ileocaecal valve.

**ileal pouch-anal anastomosis (IPAA)** - a surgical operation for Ulcerative Colitis after removal of the colon. An internal pouch is made from the ileum and attached to the anus. This means you pass stools through the anus in the usual way. Sometimes called restorative proctocolectomy.

**ileocaecal valve** – a valve at the joining of the small and large intestines that stops food residue flowing back to the ileum from the colon.

**ileorectal anastomosis** – a surgical operation for IBD after removal of the colon. The end of the ileum is attached to the rectum.

**ileostomy** - a surgical operation in which the cut end of the ileum, after a colectomy, is brought through the abdominal wall to create a spout-like opening called a stoma. Waste is then collected in a bag which is fitted over this opening and attached to the skin.

**immune system** – the body's defence system made up of tissues and cells that protect the body against infectious organisms and other invaders that cause disease. It responds by recognising and attacking antigens. An overactive immune system may be part of the cause of IBD.

**immunology** - the study of the body's immune system

**immunosuppressants/**

**immunomodulators** - drugs that stop inflammation over long periods of time (generally years rather than months), such as azathioprine.

**incontinence** – unintentional passing or leakage of stools and/or urine.

**indeterminate colitis** – inflammation in the colon that could be Ulcerative Colitis or Crohn's Disease, but which is usually treated as Ulcerative Colitis.

**inflammation** – the way the body responds to irritation, infection or other injury. Blood rushes to such affected areas, causing reddening, swelling and pain. The area is usually hot to touch.

**infliximab (Remicade)** – see anti TNF-alpha.

**infusion** – a procedure to give a drug, such as infliximab, or a solution directly into the bloodstream. The fluid flows from a sterile bag through plastic tubing and a small needle into a vein.

**intramuscular** – into a muscle.

**intravenous pyelogram (IVP)** – a special abdominal x-ray to show types of stones in the kidneys, ureters and bladder. A dye is injected into a vein in the arm and x-rays are taken as the dye passes through your system.

**intravenously** – into a vein.

**iritis** - painful inflammation of the eyes sometimes experienced by people with IBD.

**irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)** - a common chronic condition that affects the digestive system. It can cause diarrhoea, constipation, bloating and abdominal pain and discomfort. It can be confused with IBD as some of the symptoms are similar, but the two conditions and their treatment are quite different.

**isotope scan** – see nuclear scan.

**-itis** - means inflammation, such as colitis: inflammation of the colon; proctitis: inflammation of the rectum and ileitis: inflammation of the ileum.

**jejunum** – the section of small bowel above the ileum. It is rarely involved in Crohn's disease.

**key-hole surgery** – see laparoscopy.

**lactase** - an enzyme in the small intestine which digests lactose.

**lactose** - a type of sugar found in milk.

**lactose intolerance** - a common digestive disorder in which lactose is not broken down due to a lack of or reduced lactase. It causes abdominal discomfort, diarrhoea and gas after taking milk or milk products. This may need treatment with a milk-free diet. A small number of people with Crohn's Disease may develop lactose intolerance.

**laparoscopy** – a procedure in which a lighted flexible instrument called a laparoscope is passed through a small cut in the abdominal wall to examine internal organs or to carry out small-scale surgery. Also known as 'key-hole surgery'.

**large intestine** - see colon.

**laxative** – a substance that helps you to have a bowel movement. Different types of laxatives act in varying ways to clear the bowel; some stimulate the lining of the colon, others soften the stool by increasing the amount of water in the colon.

**lesion** - damage or injury to tissue anywhere in the body.

**left-sided colitis** – see distal colitis

**leucocytes** - white cells in the blood which help fight infection.

**leucocytosis** - an increased number of white cells in the blood.

**leucopenia** - a decrease in the number of white cells in the blood.

**LFTs (Liver Function Tests)** – a blood test which measures a group of enzymes to show how well the liver is working.

**liver** – the largest gland in the body with many functions; chiefly to regulate chemicals in the blood.

**maintenance therapy** – treatment (usually drug) to take long-term to keep an illness in remission.

**MAP (mycobacterium avium subspecies paratuberculosis)** – an organism that causes a disease in cattle similar to Crohn's Disease. There is ongoing controversy as to whether MAP is involved in Crohn's.

**(6)-mercaptopurine (6-MP)(Purinethol)** - a drug closely related to azathioprine, used for reducing flare-ups of IBD.

**mesalazine** – the generic name for one of the 5-aminosalicylic acid group of drugs. Brand names include Asacol, Ipocol, Mesren, Mezavant XL, Pentasa and Salofalk.

**methotrexate** – an immunosuppressant drug which may be used for IBD when azathioprine or 6-MP cannot be tolerated.

**metronidazole (Flagyl)** - an antibiotic which may be used to treat inflammation in Crohn's Disease, particularly if there is infection in the anal area.

**motility** – involuntary movement; often used to describe the contraction of muscles in the intestinal tract.

**MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) scan** – an examination of internal organs using strong magnets and radio waves rather than x-rays. A computer turns signals from the scanner into detailed pictures.

**MRI enteroclysis** – an MRI test to assess the small and large bowel.

**mucosa** – the inner lining of the intestines.

**mucus** - a slimy white jelly-like fluid produced by the lining of the intestines. People with Ulcerative Colitis often have a lot of mucus in the stools.

**mycophenolate mofetil (Cellcept)** – an immunosuppressant drug occasionally used for IBD when azathioprine or 6-MP cannot be tolerated.

**nasogastric tube** - see enteral nutrition.

**NSAIDs (non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs)** – painkillers often used for arthritis, such as ibuprofen and diclofenac. They can cause flare ups in some people with IBD.

**nuclear scan** - a test which uses a tiny amount of radioactivity injected into the bloodstream to produce pictures of the body by using a special gamma camera that picks up radioactivity. It involves taking a blood sample and then attaching an isotope (a radioactive substance) to white or red blood cells. This is then re-injected into the bloodstream. In IBD, red cell scans are sometimes used to look for the cause of bleeding; white cell scans are used to look for abscesses or inflammation of the intestine. Different isotopes are used for scanning different parts of the body, such as the liver, kidneys and bones.

**obstruction** - a blockage of the small or large intestine, often due to a narrowing.

**occult blood** - blood in the stool that you cannot find except by a laboratory test.

**oedema** - swelling caused by the accumulation of fluid in the tissues.

**oesophagus (gullet)** - tube from the throat to the stomach down which food passes.

**olsalazine (Dipentum)** - a 5-ASA drug used for treating Ulcerative Colitis.

**osteopenia** – mild weakness or thinning of the bones, which is not as severe as osteoporosis.

**osteoporosis** – weakness or thinning of the bones due to calcium loss. It is more common in IBD than the general population, and may be caused by long-term use of corticosteroids, severe active disease or by low levels of oestrogen (female sex hormones).

**ostomy** - an artificial opening of the intestine onto the wall of the abdomen (see stoma).

**paediatrician** – a doctor who specialises in the care of children and young people.

**pancolitis** – inflammation of the entire colon.

**parenteral nutrition** – a specially prepared liquid food, given into a vein when you are unable to absorb nutrients through the intestines. Also called total parenteral nutrition or TPN.

**pathogen** - harmful organism, such as a bacterium or virus that causes disease.

**pathologist** - a doctor who specialises in examining tissue removed by biopsy or during surgery. (See also histopathologist.)

**pathology** - the testing of tissue (biopsy) to check for disease.

**perforation** - an abnormal opening in the bowel wall which causes the contents of the bowel to leak into the normally sterile abdominal cavity.

**perianal** - the area round the anal opening, that is around the anus.

**peritoneum** - the membrane (a thin layer of tissue) lining the inside of the abdominal cavity.

**peritonitis** - inflammation of the peritoneum often due to a perforation of the wall of the intestine.

**piles** – see haemorrhoids.

**polyp** - a fleshy growth that juts out from the lining of the intestines..

**pouch (ileo-anal)** - an internal pouch or reservoir made from the lower part of the intestine (ileum) which is attached to the anus. This allows passing stools through the anus in the usual way.

**pouchitis** - inflammation of an ileo-anal pouch.

**prebiotic** – a natural, non-digestible, substance found in certain foods, such as bananas and leeks, that stimulates the growth and activity of specific bacteria in the intestines.

**prednisolone** - a corticosteroid drug used to reduce inflammation in IBD. It can be taken by mouth as tablets, by injection into a vein, or by an enema or suppository through the rectum.

**probiotics** – ‘good’ bacteria found in supplements or food products, such as some yoghurts, that may benefit health by improving the balance of bacteria in the gut.

**proctitis** – inflammation in the rectum or anus.

**proctocolectomy (total colectomy)** - the surgical removal of the colon and rectum.

**proctosigmoiditis** – inflammation of the rectum and lower colon.

**prognosis** - a prediction of what might happen in the future, that is the likely progress of the disease.

**prophylactic therapy** - preventive treatment.

**pus** – a thick white, yellow or greenish fluid, made up of dead white blood cells, found in abscesses, on ulcers, and on inflamed or discharging surfaces.

**pyoderma gangrenosum** - a chronic skin condition with painful ulcers most often on the legs, which can affect people with IBD.

**radiologist** - a doctor who specialises in interpreting x-ray, ultra-sound and other types of scanning examinations.

**rectum** - the last part of the colon.

**red blood cells or erythrocytes** - cells found in the blood, that contain haemoglobin, which carry oxygen from the lungs to the tissues and return carbon dioxide.

**relapse** - return of disease activity after a partial recovery. Often called a ‘flare up’.

**remission** – a period of good health, free of active disease with few or no symptoms.

**resection** - the surgical removal of a part of the intestine.

**restorative proctocolectomy** – see ileal pouch-anal anastomosis.

**rheumatologist** - a doctor with special training in the diagnosis and treatment of patients with diseases of the joints and muscles.

**right hemicolectomy** – an operation to remove the terminal ileum and caecum.

**sacroiliac joints** – joints in the lower back between the pelvis and the spine. These may become inflamed and painful in some people with IBD. This condition is called sacro-ileitis.

**septicaemia** – commonly known as blood poisoning, it is a bacterial infection of the blood.

**seton** – a loop of thread or rubber band passed through an anal fistula to allow pus to drain and to prevent abscesses forming.

**sigmoidoscopy** – an examination of the rectum and the lower colon using a short lighted rigid or flexible tube, called a sigmoidoscope, inserted through the anus.

**small intestine** - the section of the intestines which digests food and absorbs nutrients after they have passed through the stomach. The small intestine is divided into three parts: the upper region - the duodenum; the middle region – the jejunum; the lower region - the ileum.

**small bowel enema** – a special type of x-ray to examine the small intestine, particularly for strictures. Liquid barium and air are passed into the small intestine via a fine tube inserted into the nose or mouth to give detailed pictures.

**splenic flexure** - the part of the colon where the transverse and the descending colon meet (below the spleen).

**steatorrhoea** – bad smelling, pale, loose stools due to excess fat caused by poor absorption in the small intestine.

**steroids** - see corticosteroids.

**stoma** - a surgically constructed opening of the intestine onto the abdominal wall over which a bag can be fitted and sealed to the skin.

**stools** - motions, faeces.

**stricture** – a narrowing of a section of the bowel due to bowel wall thickening or scarring.

**sulphasalazine (Salazopyrin)** - a drug which combines 5-ASA with sulphapyridine to treat UC. Now used less commonly.

**suppository** - a bullet-like capsule of a drug preparation which is inserted into the body through the rectum. This means the drug acts directly on the affected area.

**sutures** – stitches.

**synbiotic** – a supplement which contains both a prebiotic and a probiotic.

**tacrolimus (Advagraf/Prograf)** – an immunosuppressant drug, similar to ciclosporin, used for severe IBD.

**tenesmus** - a constant urge to empty the bowel, usually caused by inflammation of the rectum.

**terminal ileum** - the last part of the small intestine before it joins the large intestine.

**topical treatment** - drug treatment applied directly to an affected area of the body. In IBD this usually refers to the use of suppositories and enemas to treat inflammation in the rectum or the lower end of the colon.

**total colectomy (proctocolectomy)** - the surgical removal of the colon and the rectum.

**toxic megacolon** – widening of the colon which may cause perforation, sometimes seen in a very severe attack of Ulcerative Colitis or Crohn's Colitis. Urgent surgery is almost always necessary.

**TPMT (Thiopurine Methyltransferase)** – an enzyme in blood which can be measured in a test to help predict the possibility of side effects from thioprine drugs, which are azathioprine or 6-MP.

**TPN** - total parenteral nutrition. See enteral nutrition.

**tumour** - an abnormal growth which may be benign (non-cancerous) or malignant (cancerous).

**U&E (Urea and Electrolytes)** – a blood test which mainly checks kidney function.

**ulcer** - an open sore on external or internal tissues of the body.

**ultrasound scan** – a painless test using high-pitched sound waves to produce pictures of organs in the body. In IBD it may show inflamed parts of the intestine or an abscess in the abdomen.

**upper GI Series** - an American term for a barium meal and follow through x-ray examination (see barium meal).

**uveitis** – inflammation of the eyes, which can affect people with IBD, and causes redness and soreness.

**viruses** - very small germs which can only multiply within other cells. They are different from bacteria. Antibiotic treatment is not effective against viral infections.

**white cell scan** - see 'nuclear scan'.

**x-ray** – an electromagnetic ray which passes through the body to produce pictures of the inside of the body on photographic film. Bones, muscles and organs absorb different amounts of radiation, so the pictures show different body parts in varying shades of light and dark.

### **Further help**

If you have any queries please call the **NACC Information Line** on **0845 130 2233** or email: [nacc@nacc.org.uk](mailto:nacc@nacc.org.uk)

### **NACC-in-Contact**

**☎ 0845 130 3344**

**weekday afternoons 1-3.30pm  
and evenings 6.30-9pm.**

A supportive listening service run by trained volunteers who have IBD or a relative with IBD.

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The National Association for Colitis and Crohn's Disease (NACC) is a voluntary Association, established in 1979, which has 30,000 members and 70 Groups throughout the United Kingdom.

Membership of the Association costs £12 a year. New members who are on lower incomes due to their health or employment circumstances may join at a lower rate. Additional donations to help the work of the Association are always welcomed.

# The Gastrointestinal Tract

