SUPPORTING SOMEONE WITH CROHN'S OR COLITIS

People with Crohn's or Colitis may need support from those around them. This could range from a friend calling up to see how they are to a partner providing care during a flare-up.

People who provide this support or care play a vital role in the management of Crohn's or Colitis. This includes physical and emotional support. But providing care for someone with Crohn's or Colitis can also have an impact on the caregiver.

This information is for anyone who provides support or care for someone with Crohn's or Colitis. It provides:

- Explanations of what Crohn's and Colitis are and how they might affect someone
- Ways that you can support someone when they are unwell
- Examples of practical things you can do to help
- Help for you to understand if someone is not coping, and how you can find help for them
- Examples of feelings and emotions you might have
- Support to help you look after yourself

We also have information on **supporting your child**. This may be more relevant for parents of children under 16 years.

Most of this information has been written using evidence about people with Crohn's Disease or Ulcerative Colitis. If the person you support has Microscopic Colitis, you may still find it useful. Where we use the term 'Colitis' in this information, we are referring to Ulcerative Colitis.

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KEY FACTS ABOUT SUPPORTING SOMEONE WITH CROHN'S OR COLITIS

- Crohn's Disease and Ulcerative Colitis are the two main types of Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD). They are lifelong conditions of the gut, but they can cause symptoms outside the gut, too.
- Crohn's and Colitis affect everyone differently. They can be unpredictable, with symptoms changing over time.

- Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD) is different from irritable bowel syndrome (IBS).
- If you do not have Crohn's or Colitis, it can be hard to understand what it's like to live with them.
- Knowing that you are there to listen without judgement can really help.
- Being flexible with any arrangements you make can also help.
- From a practical point of view, they may appreciate help with everyday tasks like shopping, transport to appointments, collecting prescriptions, or childcare.
- There may be a point where they feel you are helping 'too much.' Ask the person with Crohn's or Colitis what support they need or would like.
- Remember that it is important to look after yourself, too.

ABOUT CROHN'S AND COLITIS

Crohn's Disease and **Ulcerative Colitis** are the main types of Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD). **Microscopic Colitis** is another type of Inflammatory Bowel Disease.

The main symptoms include:

- Tummy pain
- **Diarrhoea**
- **Fatigue**
- Weight loss

Crohn's and Colitis can also affect parts of the body outside the gut causing mouth ulcers, **joint pain**, and problems with the eyes, skin, **bones** or liver.

Treatment for Crohn's and Colitis varies from person-to-person. It may include tablets, injections, drips, enemas, specialist liquid foods, or surgery.

If you do not have Crohn's or Colitis, it may be hard to understand what it's like to live with one of these conditions. You could ask the person affected to try to explain what it is like for them. But remember it's not always easy to talk about bowel problems. Our **talking toolkit** might help them find the right words.

Useful points about Crohn's and Colitis:

- They are lifelong conditions. Right now, there is no cure. Treatment can help keep Crohn's or Colitis under control, but symptoms can flare up again.
- They affect everyone differently. You may know someone whose symptoms rarely trouble them. Others may need **surgery** or lifelong **medicine**.
- They change over time. For this reason, they are sometimes called fluctuating conditions.
- They are invisible conditions. A person may seem fine on the outside, even if they have painful and distressing symptoms.
- They are unpredictable. Symptoms can change from one day to the next.
- Crohn's and Colitis are not contagious. You cannot catch Crohn's or Colitis by spending time with someone who has it.

IBD is not the same as IBS (irritable bowel syndrome), but some of the symptoms of both conditions may be similar. Although IBS can be difficult to deal with, it can usually be managed with lifestyle changes and medicines that you can buy from pharmacies. Unlike Crohn's or Colitis, IBS does not cause bowel inflammation or blood loss. It's generally less serious than IBD.

You may want to find out a bit more about their condition. There's a lot of misleading information online, so it's best to focus your search on reliable sources such as Crohn's & Colitis UK or the NHS website. Our information **all about Crohn's and Colitis** is a good starting point. We also have **information on a wide range of topics**, from food and treatment to coping with symptoms and everyday life. All our information is **certified as trusted health information** by the Patient Information Forum.

Before you start finding out about Crohn's and Colitis, check how much your friend or relative wants you to know about their condition. Some people may feel their privacy is being invaded if their friends know details about the symptoms they're having. Or that their parents are trying to take control away from them by doing all the research on possible medicines. Some people want to avoid knowing too much about their condition altogether, so telling them facts about it may be unwelcome. Discussing this beforehand, or reading about the condition together, can help avoid misunderstandings.

SUPPORTING SOMEONE WHEN THEY'RE UNWELL

It's natural to feel anxious and helpless when someone you care about is unwell. It can be hard knowing that you cannot take their condition away. The good news is that you can help them live well with it. Crohn's and Colitis are largely hidden conditions that can cause stigma, fear and isolation. Letting your friend or relative know that you're there for them can be a great comfort. Here, we outline some things you can do to support them.

Be there to listen if they want to talk

Sometimes they might prefer just to carry on as usual and not talk about their illness. But at other times they may appreciate someone to talk to. Take time to try to understand what they're going through.

Put yourself in their shoes

Things that seem straightforward to you can be more difficult for someone with Crohn's or Colitis. For example, they may seem overly anxious about taking a long journey. Or appear to be fussy about when and where they're going to eat. But quick access to toilets can be crucial, and being careful about their diet may be a way they manage their symptoms. It helps to be flexible and accommodating in your plans and to consider their needs.

> "Multiple medications and diet restrictions can cause problems with family and friends who don't understand I have to take a tablet at a set time or eat something now. Many times, I've found myself in a challenging situation because the people I'm with don't want to eat yet! I carry snacks and water wherever I go."
>
> **JULIA**
> **LIVING WITH CROHN'S**

Help boost their confidence

Having a negative body image and low self-esteem are common among people with Crohn's or Colitis. When active, the conditions can lead to weight loss, hair loss, skin changes, scars, stomas, and fistulas. And some of the medicines used to treat Crohn's and Colitis can have side effects, such as weight gain. Having a strong support system of friends and family can make a big difference to how your friend or loved one feels about themselves. Reassuring them that you are there and you do not see them differently can make a big difference to them.

Be understanding

Crohn's and Colitis can be very unpredictable, which can make planning things in advance more challenging. Sometimes your friend or loved one may not be able to make it to an event, or they may have to cancel plans at the last minute. They likely feel disappointed about letting you down, so it's important to understand that it's out of their control. It's helpful to reassure them that it's no trouble to change your plans. Find a way to still involve them if possible.

Living with Crohn's or Colitis may also have had a negative effect on their finances, for example if they have had to take time off work. This can mean some tough decisions about what they can afford to say yes to. If possible, find a way to work around their situation so they can still be involved. For example, you could go to see them at home if they're unable to attend an evening out.

Keep them in the loop

If they're regularly missing out on work, school or social events because of ill health, they can feel isolated. This can have a negative effect on their mental health too. Keeping them updated on what's been going on will help them feel that they're still part of the group. It also helps them to feel like themselves, and not like they're defined by their condition. While it's important to be mindful of not making them feel left out, it can be nice for them to know you have not forgotten about them.

Do not judge their food choices

The relationship with **food** is different for everyone living with Crohn's or Colitis. Foods that may help one person may do nothing or even make symptoms worse in another. If you want to help by cooking for them, find out what they feel comfortable eating.

> "As a Crohn's sufferer, I've found friends' or loved ones' judgments about me harder to deal with at times than the disease itself. When people offer patience and understanding, it really does make a massive difference."
>
> **SARAH,**
> **LIVING WITH CROHN'S**

Help them find a community if they want to

Helping your friend or loved one connect with other people who know what they're going through can really help. People with Crohn's or Colitis who take part in events run by their hospital or our **local networks** often say it helps them feel they are not alone. We also offer **virtual social events**, which can be a great way to connect with other people even if they do not feel up to going out. But this is not for everyone, so check what your friend or family member is comfortable with.

PRACTICAL THINGS YOU CAN DO

You may be able to offer help with the practical challenges of living with Crohn's or Colitis. But it is important not to 'over-help'. Try to strike a balance between helping and letting your friend or loved one control their own life. As with anyone, it's important for people with Crohn's and Colitis to maintain as much of their independence as possible.

Everyone is different, and some people appreciate more support than others. Talk to your friend or family member to find out what they need. This will vary from person to person. It could involve things like helping with housework, shopping, or childcare. The level of support they need may change as they become used to dealing with their condition, or as their symptoms vary. It's also important that you're not taking on more than you are able to or comfortable with.

Here are some ideas on how you may be able to help the key challenges of living with Crohn's or Colitis.

Fatigue

Many people with Crohn's or Colitis experience fatigue. Fatigue is ongoing tiredness, lack of energy or exhaustion that does not improve even after rest or sleep. It can affect concentration and make it hard to remember things.

Fatigue can impact the person's life in every way, such as their performance in school or at work, relationships, their ability to do everyday tasks and their social life. Because of this, many people with Crohn's or Colitis say fatigue is the most difficult symptom to deal with. There are many little things that you could offer to do to help, such as

- Make a cup of tea, run them a bath, or help with the housework
- Share your class notes with them
- Plan relaxing ways to spend time together when your usual activities may be too much of a strain
- Catch-up online if they do not feel up to meeting in-person
- Offer them a lift so they do not have to drive or deal with public transport

It may sound odd, but doing exercise can sometimes help fatigue. You could suggest doing some gentle exercise together. But remember that sometimes your friend or loved one might not be able to manage even light activity.

Our **information on fatigue** has lots of hints and tips on how to help others living with fatigue.

Pain

Crohn's and Colitis can cause severe tummy, joint or back pain. But there is not much good evidence to guide pain relief in Crohn's and Colitis. You could ask what helps your friend or family member manage their pain and support them with it. Some people find hot water bottles helpful. If you make a hot water bottle for them, make sure you wrap it in a cloth or towel, so it does not scald them.

Some studies have shown that slow deep breathing and mindfulness exercises like meditation can help with pain. You can find lots of apps, online tools or in-person courses to help with this.

You could help them keep a note of their pain or other symptoms so they can spot any patterns or possible triggers.

Pain can be difficult to describe to healthcare professionals, so you could help your friend or relative find the right words. Some people describe their pain as aching, cramping, stabbing, burning, shooting, tender or throbbing. It can also be useful to tell their nurse or doctor how the pain affects their daily life. For example, "I couldn't go to work this week, because my pain made it too hard to travel.". Or "I couldn't look after the children yesterday because it was too painful to pick them up".

Never offer someone with Crohn's or Colitis non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). These include ibuprofen, diclofenac or high-dose aspirin. There is some evidence that NSAIDs can make Crohn's or Colitis symptoms worse. This could be more likely if their condition is active, or they take NSAIDs for a long time. Their IBD team can advise whether NSAIDs are right for them.

We have more about pain relief in our information on **other treatments for Crohn's or Colitis**.

Seeing someone you care about in pain can be distressing, especially when it feels like there's nothing you can do. Acknowledging their pain and helping them find ways to cope with it can mean a lot. People who feel more in control and have better social support are able to cope better with their pain.

Medicines

The thought of taking medicines long-term can be overwhelming for some people. Information about medicines and their possible side effects can be scary and difficult to process. We have information on **medicines used to treat Crohn's and Colitis** that you might find helpful.

You could also ask if they'd like someone to collect their prescriptions, remind them to take their medicines, or encourage them to keep taking their prescribed medicines even when they feel well.

Some medicines for Crohn's and Colitis can be given by injection at home. This can be frightening at first, and having someone with them can put them at ease. A specialist nurse may be able to train you to help them, or to do their injections for them.

> "When I was first told I needed to inject myself at home, I was worried about doing it wrong."
>
> **SOPHIE**
> **LIVING WITH CROHN'S**

Access to toilets

People with Crohn's or Colitis sometimes need to use the toilet urgently. Keep this in mind when planning trips or events. Try to be patient if you end up waiting for them for a while, or if they suddenly rush off to the toilet. Some people might also experience bowel incontinence. We have separate information about **managing bowel incontinence**. This includes tips on helping them prepare if they're worried about bowel incontinence or bowel leaks while out.

You could encourage your friend or loved one to become a **member of Crohn's & Colitis UK**, or **gift membership** to them. By doing this they will get a 'Can't Wait Card', which explains that they need to use the toilet urgently. They will also get a free Radar Key to unlock disabled toilets. People with Crohn's or Colitis are sometimes challenged about using accessible toilets by people who do not understand about invisible illnesses. They may appreciate having someone to support them in these situations.

If you are out and about at venues and attractions, you could download our venues and attractions letter. This is a letter that they can give to the staff at the venue. It helps explain what it's like living with Crohn's or Colitis and the impact the conditions can have on days out.

Download our attractions and venues letter.

Appointments and procedures

People with Crohn's or Colitis might have lots of medical appointments. Dealing with these and fitting them into everyday life can be challenging.

You could help your loved one make a list of things they want to discuss at the appointment, to make sure they do not forget anything. You could offer to attend appointments with them to keep them company. Or take notes or help them take in what the healthcare professional says. Our information on **medical terms** might be useful to understand some of the terms you might hear.

Sometimes people will need a medicine to make them relaxed and sleepy when they have a test or procedure. Because this can make them drowsy, they are not allowed to drive or travel home alone afterwards. If you're able to, you could offer them a lift or travel with them. And keep them company until they feel better again.

Check if they can access and understand the information they get from the hospital. Letters and test results are often accessed online. If the person you support cannot access them online, see if they can be provided in a different format.

Support after surgery

Some people with Crohn's or Colitis need surgery. Afterwards, they may feel weak and tired. They may be unable to do any lifting or driving for a while. Offering to do things like cooking and cleaning could be a great help. We have more information about **surgery for Crohn's Disease** and **surgery for Ulcerative Colitis**. It covers what to expect before and after surgery. It includes information on the impact of surgery on everyday life, which can be helpful for friends and families. It covers topics like diet, work, exercise, relationships, fertility and travelling.

Explaining to others

You may be able to help your friend or loved one by advocating for them. For example, by standing up for them if someone questions why they often cancel arrangements or are picky about food. Helping others understand the impact of your friend's condition can be helpful. But make sure it is something they are comfortable with. If they want to have these conversations themselves, you could offer to help them work out what to say. Our **Talking Toolkit** can help to explain what they want other people to know.

Support at work or school

Some people with Crohn's or Colitis might need support or adjustments at work or school. You could help them find out what they need and how to get it. We cover these in some of our other resources:

- **Our guide for employees** covers the support that people with Crohn's or Colitis are entitled to at work, and adjustments that can make coping with work easier.
- **Our guide for employers** outlines how employers and managers can help provide a safe, inclusive and supportive work environment for people with Crohn's or Colitis.
- **Our factsheet for schools** explains how school staff can support children with Crohn's or Colitis.

CICRA, a charity supporting children with Crohn's and Colitis and their families, has more **information for schools**.

Some people with Crohn's or Colitis experience stigma and discrimination at work. This is often because of a lack of awareness about the conditions. If you have a colleague who is experiencing this, you could help by raising awareness of the conditions. But first make sure they are happy for you to do this.

Financial support

Depending on their circumstances, your friend or family member might need, or be eligible for, financial support. We cover these in some of our other resources:

- **Money and finding financial support** covers financial support that may be available, like benefits, grants, and help with health, housing and transport costs.
- **Disability benefits** lists benefits that some people with Crohn's or Colitis might be eligible for.

We also have guides on who may be able to claim **personal independence payments** (PIP) or **disability living allowance** (DLA), and how to do it. Having Crohn's or Colitis does not mean someone is automatically eligible for these benefits. Many people who apply may not be successful.

Raising awareness

Raising awareness of Crohn's and Colitis is a great way to show your friend or relative that you're not embarrassed by their condition, and you want to help them.

- Join in with raising awareness. You could follow **Crohn's & Colitis UK** on social media, campaign with us, or just talk about your experiences. Make sure the person with Crohn's or Colitis is comfortable with what you're planning. And check they're OK with others knowing about their condition if you plan to mention their name. We have more information on ways you can **get involved**.
- Make a difference. Many people choose to **donate**, take part in one of our **events**, or **fundraise** for their loved one as a way to make a real impact. Whether that's training IBD nurses, funding research into new treatments, or helping people to get an earlier diagnosis. You could also treat them to a **gift membership**, which will provide them with vital information and tools to help them live well.

RELATIONSHIPS

You might not think of yourself as a carer but if you regularly support someone with Crohn's or Colitis, you play an important caring role. Supporting someone who has a lifelong condition can put a strain on your relationship. It can be difficult if you feel that your relationship with the person you care about has changed. They might seem more irritable than usual if they're in a lot of pain, or be too tired to do the things they used to do. It's important to remember that they're still the same person they have always been, just in a different situation.

> "The psychological aspects of my Mum's Crohn's have been the most difficult to relate to – you just see her as your Mum when you're young, not a whole person with her own issues! Open and honest conversations are really the only way to get through it, and to remember that your support is appreciated, even if it doesn't always seem that way."
>
> **NICKY**
> **DAUGHTER OF ANNE, LIVING WITH CROHN'S**

You might feel that your relationship is becoming unbalanced, and the only time you spend together is when you're looking after them. It's important to make time to do something you both enjoy together. They will probably appreciate the chance to feel like themselves again and not just a patient. This includes not feeling like they're being protected from difficult situations just because they're unwell.

Young carers

When the person you support is having a flare-up, you may have to take on more responsibilities. This can be a lot to deal with if you're a young person and this is the first time you have had to look after someone. If you can, share responsibilities with other people in your family or social circle so that you're not overwhelmed. It is OK to need help.

The NHS has **information for young carers,** including **how to get help and support** if you need it.

Parents

Crohn's or Colitis can be a lot to cope with on top of all the other challenges young people face. Try to be as understanding as possible if they seem irritable or stressed. You might find it helpful to hear other **young people share their experiences** of living with Crohn's and Colitis. They cover things like school, leaving home for the first time, and transitioning into adult care.

Having a child with Crohn's or Colitis in the family can affect the whole family, including other children. It can be hard to meet everyone's needs. It's important to be as honest as possible with siblings about what's going on. Although they may be scared about the treatment their brother or sister might need, they can worry if their parents keep information from them. They can also feel very protective of their sibling and might worry about them being bullied at school.

If your child has had Crohn's or Colitis from a young age and you're used to looking after them, it can be hard to adjust as they want to take more responsibility themselves. Our information on **transition to adult care** outlines the transition process, how you can help and how you can start giving them more independence. Even when your child becomes an adult, you will probably still worry about their health. It's important to talk to them to find out how much involvement they're comfortable with.

We offer **virtual social events** where people can share their experiences and tips for living with Crohn's and Colitis. These are not just for people who have the conditions – they're also open to family, friends or colleagues. Some of the sessions are specifically for parents and carers.

Partners

You might find that the balance of your relationship changes. There may be times when your usual daily life becomes interrupted, for example by hospital appointments or because your partner is fatigued. You might need to take on more of the everyday tasks and roles. If your partner cannot work, you might need to take on more financial responsibility.

You may find that your sex life changes or there is a loss of intimacy in your relationship. This could be because of:

- Fear of experiencing symptoms during sex
- Symptoms during a flare-up affecting how attractive your partner feels
- Lower testosterone levels in men taking steroid or opiate medicines, or with inflammation
- Low body image and self-esteem
- Depression or anxiety
- Side effects of medicines used to treat depression and anxiety
- Fatigue

Or it could be because you fear hurting them or making their symptoms worse. Try to be as honest as possible about how you feel. It's likely your partner has similar concerns themselves. We have separate information on **sex and relationships**, which might help you think and talk about sex, intimacy and relationships.

You may also have questions about having children together. Having Crohn's or Colitis does not generally affect fertility. But some types of surgery might have an impact. Most women with Crohn's or Colitis can expect to have a standard pregnancy and a healthy baby. We have more information about **reproductive health**, **pregnancy and birth**, and **postnatal care and breastfeeding**.

SUPPORTING THEIR MENTAL WELLBEING

People living with Crohn's or Colitis are more likely to experience mental health problems than the general population. This includes conditions like anxiety and depression. Around half of all people with Crohn's or Colitis say it has affected their mental health in some way.

Living with a lifelong condition can trigger lots of different feelings and emotions. Your friend or loved one may feel anxious, frustrated, sad, scared, or angry about having the condition and dealing with distressing symptoms. These feelings are completely normal, and many people with Crohn's or Colitis experience them from time to time. You may be able to help them by:

- Letting them know that you care and have time for them
- Being there to listen without judging when they want to talk
- Not forcing them to talk or making them feel uncomfortable
- Offering practical help in a way that works for them
- Doing what you usually do

If you think your friend or loved one is finding it hard to cope, you could suggest they talk to their GP or IBD team. They can help them access the support they need. This may be medicines or talking therapies. Talking therapies can help people with Crohn's or Colitis cope better with their symptoms. They can also help lower stress levels and improve mental wellbeing.

We have more about how to look after your mental health if you have Crohn's or Colitis in our information on **mental health and wellbeing**.

CROHN'S & COLITIS UK

I'M CONCERNED THAT THEY'RE NOT LOOKING AFTER THEMSELVES

It can be disheartening if you feel a friend or loved one is not looking after their health, especially when they have a lifelong condition. For example, you may notice that they miss doses of their medicine or ignore worrying symptoms. This can be frustrating, but it's important to accept that they need to make their own choices. There are limits to what you can do to support someone else.

Do your best to be patient. You cannot force someone to talk, but you can make sure they know you're there for them when they feel ready. Try not to take it personally if they do not want your help at this point and accept that they are responsible for their own health.

> "It was devastating to watch my 15-year-old son suffer and him not really wanting to deal with it. I felt helpless as all I could do was do the 'admin' of appointments and prescriptions etc. Thankfully as he's matured, he has accepted his diagnosis, regularly takes his meds and keeps himself well."
>
> **ANGELA**
> **PARENT OF KEENAN, LIVING WITH CROHN'S**

Sometimes you might feel you can tell when your loved one is becoming unwell before they do. For example, they may not realise they have been more tired than usual when they get home. You could try making a list of warning signs together while they are well. This can make things easier to talk about when you notice things changing. It's a good idea to decide together how they want you to help if they do become unwell. Remember that it may not help to be overbearing or treat your friend or loved one like a patient.

If you are supporting a vulnerable adult and you feel that they are not looking after themselves, you should contact your local adult social services. You can do this in confidence without giving any names and just have a conversation about the situation. This will then help to decide if any further action is needed by the local authority.

LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

Supporting someone with Crohn's or Colitis can be rewarding and can bring you closer together. But it can also be tiring, putting a lot of demands on your physical and emotional energy. It's important to find the right balance between supporting them and looking after yourself.

> "Pace yourself and be realistic about the support you can offer. This can be a long-term commitment, so ensure you take plenty of time for yourself as well."
>
> **NICKY**
> **DAUGHTER OF ANNE, LIVING WITH CROHN'S**

To make sure you have enough energy to help someone else and look after your own wellbeing, you could try the following tips:

- Be realistic about what you can do. Your help is extremely valuable, but you cannot support your loved one effectively if you do not look after yourself too. Setting boundaries may be difficult for both of you, but they're important to ensure that you both understand your roles. You can reassure them that you're still there for them, even at times when you cannot physically help.
- Be honest about your feelings. Often friends and family try to protect each other by hiding when they're struggling or not speaking up when they have

concerns. Being honest about your feelings may make it easier for your loved one to open up about theirs.

- Do not burn yourself out. Be sure to take breaks if you're feeling overwhelmed. Do not feel guilty about taking time for yourself. You will be able to support the person you care about much better if you look after yourself properly.
- Confide in someone. Looking after someone with Crohn's or Colitis can have a big impact on your life as well as theirs, and it's important you feel supported. If you feel your friends do not understand what you're going through, connecting with others in the same situation can be really helpful. Support and caregiving for people with Crohn's or Colitis may be different across communities. You may find help within your own community, or you may prefer to look outside your community for help. You could join our **closed Facebook forum** or attend one of our in-person **Local Network events** or **virtual social events**. But check that the person you support is comfortable with this. **Carers UK** also offers support and information. You might want to consider counselling if you feel overwhelmed.
- Do not do it alone. Take any support that's available to you and share your caring responsibilities with others if you can.

IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS THAT MATTER

> "I just check in, offer to help out and occasionally send sunflowers to cheer my Mum up. With no big fix for IBD, it is the little things that matter."
>
> **NICKY**
> **DAUGHTER OF ANNE, LIVING WITH CROHN'S**

You do not need to do everything; even small actions matter. Small things can have a big impact and just being there for your friend or loved one can help a lot.

Research has suggested that people with Crohn's or Colitis who are lonely and stressed have worse health-related quality of life. So just keeping them company and helping them relax can be a great help.

OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Carers Trust: Working to transform the lives of unpaid carers
www.carers.org

Carers UK: Provide expert information, advice and support for unpaid carers. They also campaign to make life better for carers
www.carersuk.org

CICRA: A charity supporting children with Crohn's or Colitis and their families:
www.cicra.org

MIND: A strong and caring community, standing up for better mental health for everyone.
www.mind.org.uk

Samaritans: Prevents suicide through the power of human connection. Connecting people in crisis with trained volunteers who will always listen.
www.samaritans.org

YoungMinds: Provide young people with the tools to look after their mental health.
www.youngminds.org.uk

HELP AND SUPPORT FROM CROHN'S & COLITIS UK

We're here for you. Our information covers a wide range of topics. From treatment options to symptoms, relationship concerns to employment issues, our information can help you manage your condition. We'll help you find answers, access support and take control.

All information is available on our **website.**

Helpline service

Our helpline team provides up-to-date, evidence-based information. You can find out more on our **helpline web page.** Our team can support you to live well with Crohn's or Colitis.

Our Helpline team can provide support by:

- Providing information about Crohn's and Colitis
- Listening and talking through your situation
- Helping you to find support from others in the Crohn's and Colitis community
- Providing details of other specialist organisations

You can call the Helpline on **0300 222 5700**. Or visit our **LiveChat service**. You can read our information on **when the Helpline** is open for more details..

You can email **helpline@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk** at any time. The Helpline will aim to respond to your email within three working days.

Our helpline also offers a language interpretation service, which allows us to speak to callers in their preferred language.

Virtual Social Events

We offer people affected by Crohn's or Colitis the chance to join a virtual social event with others across the UK. The events will be a chance to chat, share experiences and potentially learn from others. Each event may have a specific topic but the overall discussion will be driven by what those attending wish to talk about.

Family, friends and colleagues are more than welcome to attend.

Visit our **Virtual Social Events** page to find out what is available.

Crohn's & Colitis UK Forum

This closed-group Facebook community is for anyone affected by Crohn's or Colitis. You can share your experiences and receive support from others. Find out more about the **Crohn's & Colitis UK Forum.**

Help with toilet access when out

There are many benefits to becoming a member of Crohn's & Colitis UK. One of these is a free RADAR key to unlock accessible toilets. Another is a Can't Wait Card. This card shows that you have a medical condition. It will help when you are out and need urgent access to the toilet. See **our membership webpage** for more information. Or you can call the Membership Team on **01727 734465**.

ABOUT CROHN'S & COLITIS UK

We're Crohn's & Colitis UK and we're changing what it means to live with these lifelong gut conditions. 1 in 123 people in the UK have Crohn's Disease or Ulcerative Colitis. These are unpredictable conditions that could flare up at any time.

No one should face that alone. That's where we can help.

We provide trusted information and support cutting-edge research. We also lead bold campaigns to get more people talking about Crohn's and Colitis. We help people understand these conditions, give them the attention they deserve and bring people together to create change.

This year, 25,000 people will be told they have Crohn's or Colitis. Once diagnosed, the obstacles continue. Today, there is no cure. People simply don't understand these conditions. So, we have listened. It's time for change & we're leading the way.

Our information is available thanks to the generosity of our supporters and members. Find out how you can join the fight against Crohn's and Colitis by calling **01727 734465.** Or you can visit **our website**.

About our information

We follow strict processes to make sure our information is based on up-to-date evidence and is easy to understand. We produce it with patients, medical advisers and other professionals. It is not intended to replace advice from your own healthcare professional.

You can find out more on **our website**.

We hope that you've found this information helpful. Please email us at **evidence@crohnsandcolitis.org.uk** if:

- You have any comments or suggestions for improvements
- You would like more information about the evidence we use
- You would like details of any conflicts of interest

You can also write to us at **Crohn's & Colitis UK, 1 Bishops Square, Hatfield, Herts, AL10 9NE.** Or you can contact us through the **Helpline** on **0300 222 5700**.

We do not endorse any products mentioned in our information.

Supporting someone with Crohn's or Colitis, edition 3

Last review: November 2025

Next review: November 2028

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