

# What is Crohn's Disease?

Crohn's disease is a type of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) that causes swelling and inflammation in the digestive tract

Crohn's disease is an autoimmune disorder and type of inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) which affects the digestive tract, predominantly impacting the small intestine and the initial part of the large intestine. It can however affect any part of the digestive system as inflammation can penetrate deeper layers of the bowel. Symptoms develop gradually and typically worsen over time, and may include periods of remission lasting weeks or years. The exact cause of Crohn's Disease remains unknown, but it is thought to be linked to an inflammatory immune response.

## Risk factors

**Immune system dysfunction**  
Chronic inflammation and dysbiosis of the gut microbiome.

**Genetic predisposition and family history** - there are higher risks if you have a first-degree relative with CD.

**Age** - it affects all ages but is more prevalent among the young population.

**Ethnicity** - higher risks in caucasian communities.

**Environmental factors** - diet, stress, smoking, and certain bacteria or viruses can trigger or worsen the condition.

## Common Symptoms

- Abdominal pain and cramping, typically worse after meals
- Recurring diarrhoea
- Fever
- Extreme fatigue and exhaustion
- Blood and mucus in stools
- Reduced appetite and weight loss
- Malabsorption
- Mouth sores
- Pain and anal drainage



## UK Statistics

The occurrence and prevalence of Crohn's Disease are on the rise

Crohn's disease affects roughly 83 out of every million individuals annually, with a rate of 5.2 cases per 100,000 children each year. The estimated prevalence stands at 10.6 cases per 100,000 people. Typically, 20–30% of cases manifest before the age of 20, with the median diagnosis age around 30. It affects men and women at approximately equal rates.

## Diet & Nutrition

The foods we eat play an important role in supporting gut health and related conditions. BANT nutrition practitioners assess and identify potential nutritional imbalances to understand how these may contribute to an individual's symptoms and health concerns. There is no cure or singular treatment for Crohn's Disease, however it can be successfully supported with dietary and lifestyle recommendations to manage occurrence, frequency and severity of symptoms.

