10 Tips for People Living with Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)

1. Learn about IBD and its signs and symptoms. If you don’t understand issues about your disease, make a list and be sure to ask your health care providers the next time you see them.

2. Remember that everyone with IBD is different. There is no “typical case”.

3. Find someone who you can talk to about your condition and who will provide a sympathetic ear.

4. Eat a well balanced diet, take a daily multivitamin and other vitamin supplements if necessary.

5. Don’t do more than you can physically manage but don’t do less than your potential just because you have IBD.

6. Ask your health care providers what your medications are for, what side effects there might be and how long you should expect to use them.

7. Once you have decided on a treatment make sure that you follow through; if medications have been prescribed, take them regularly as prescribed.

8. Some medications need to be continued even when you are well; their purpose is to keep you well.

9. Do not smoke, especially if your diagnosis is Crohn’s disease—smoking is known to worsen Crohn’s disease.

10. If you have colitis you may need regular colonoscopies to screen for cancer—ask your health care providers if this applies to you.

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