

What is Inflammatory Bowel Disease?

Inflammatory Bowel Disease (which is NOT the same as irritable bowel syndrome) refers to two chronic diseases that cause inflammation of the intestines: Ulcerative Colitis and Crohn's disease. These diseases affect over 500,000 people in the United States and are generally considered, a disease of young people developing in person aged 15-35. Both these diseases affect the intestinal tract and have a wide variety of symptoms. Common symptoms may include:

- Abdominal pain and cramping
- Diarrhea/vomiting
- Bloating
- Decreased appetite/loss of weight
- Rectal bleeding
- Fissures, abscesses, and fistulas
- Intestinal obstruction
- Joint pain/arthritis
- Debilitating Anxiety
- Fatigue
- Lack of concentration/focus due to pain and other symptoms

Symptoms can be exacerbated without provocation or can be triggered by changes in diet, environment, and stress. When a student has an acute attack of Inflammatory Bowel Disease, the student is literally incapacitated by pain and continuous bouts of diarrhea.

Exacerbations of Irritable Bowel Disease are both unpredictable and fluctuating. The student may not appear to look "sick", but he/she is. Additionally, Inflammatory Bowel Disease makes it very difficult for the student to schedule life activities. This can cause serious ramifications in an educational setting. It is often difficult for the student to pay attention in class, complete out-of-class assignments, and focus when taking quizzes and tests. Absences can become a problem when the symptoms are exacerbated and the student may even require complete bed rest or hospitalization.

Helpful Information for Instructors who teach students with Inflammatory Bowel Disease

Students with Inflammatory Bowel Diseases:

- Live with a fear of exacerbation of the condition (especially when in public). They are keenly aware/on edge that at any time symptoms may be triggered.
- May need to leave class if symptoms exacerbate and may or may not return to class depending on the severity of the symptoms.
- May be absent from class more often. When their condition is

exacerbated, it is virtually impossible for them to leave their homes to come to class.

- May arrive late to class due to the management of their symptoms.
- Tend to have decreased endurance levels and stamina.
- May be required to take medications that can affect the student's alertness, concentration, and physical discomfort level.
- **Stress is a major trigger for Inflammatory Bowel Disease.**

What Instructors can do to help Student's with Inflammatory Bowel Disease

- Make sure the guidelines for attendance and lateness are clearly stated in your syllabus. If a pattern of student absence is noted, please contact Disability Services.
- If absence occurs, the student will need to meet with the instructor for access to information missed in class.
- Recognize that while these students may not "appear" ill, they have a very serious chronic disease.
- Do not question the student concerning their condition.

Because the symptoms of Inflammatory Bowel Disease affect bodily elimination function, it is often embarrassing for the student to discuss it.

- If possible, try to personally "connect" one-on-one with these students. This will assure them of your understanding of the situation and help diminish their stress levels in class.
- If these students arrive late or get up to leave class during lecture, do not draw attention to their arrival/leaving. It is beneficial for these students to sit near the door in case they need to leave during class.
- If possible, work with Disability Services to help accommodate classroom/academic "situations" that may arise due to the student's condition.

Student Responsibilities

- Students with Inflammatory Bowel Disease are responsible to meet the same academic and behavioral standards that other students at MCCC are required to meet.
- Students must contact their instructor in the event of absence. If there is a serious problem which involves more than one absence, students should

contact their instructor and Disability Services at (734) 384-4167.

- If an absence occurs, the student is responsible to contact the instructor in regards to any missed assignments, homework, or tests.
- Students who receive test accommodation due to the previously mentioned disabilities must submit their requests to Disability Services 5 to 7 business days before the test is scheduled. Disability Services coordinates all test accommodations for these students.

**For further information,
please contact:
Disability Service
(located in the Campbell
Resource Learning Center,
C-218)
(734) 384-4167**

Important Information about Inflammatory Bowel Disease

**Monroe County
Community College
1555 S. Raisinville Rd
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