

Managing a flare - a step by step plan

Managing a mild to moderate flare:

1 Recognise your symptoms

You might be having a **mild to moderate flare** if:

- You're going to the toilet 2–5 times in 24 hours OR noticeable increase from usual.
- There are small amounts of blood in your poo.
- You feel urgency but can control it.
- You can still eat and drink normally.
- Your symptoms aren't disturbing your sleep.
- You do not have a fever.

2 Start treatment at home

- Use 1g mesalazine suppositories at night, or increase to 1g twice a day.
- Take your oral mesalazine at the highest dose prescribed (e.g. Octasa 4.8g per day, Salofalk granules 3g per day, Pentasa 4g per day).
- Contact your GP for more medication if needed.

3 Review your progress after 2 weeks

If you're getting better:

Continue increased treatment until you're feeling better, and then for a further 4–6 weeks. Then gradually reduce (over a few weeks) to your usual daily dose.

Continue mesalazine when well to help stay in remission.

If you're NOT getting better:

Continue increased treatment and contact the IBD helpline: uhsussex.ibdnursingservice@nhs.net 01273 664427 (answerphone service)
You may need a course of steroids (oral or rectal) - your IBD team will advise next steps.

Managing a severe flare:

1 Recognise your symptoms

You might be having a **severe flare** if:

- You're going to the toilet 6 or more times in 24 hours.
- There are large amounts of blood in your poo.
- You cannot control urgency/bowels.
- You have abdominal pain.
- You are losing weight.
- Your symptoms are disturbing your sleep.
- You have a fever.

2 Get in touch

Call the IBD helpline straight away:
uhsussex.ibdnursingservice@nhs.net
01273 664427 (answerphone service)

3 Start treatment at home

- Use 1g mesalazine suppositories at night.
- Take your oral mesalazine at the highest dose prescribed (e.g. Octasa 4.8g per day, Salofalk granules 3g per day, Pentasa 4g per day).
- Contact your GP for more medication if needed.

You may need a course of steroids - your IBD team will advise next steps.

Side effects?

If you're experiencing side effects from any of these medications tell your team straight away via the IBD helpline.

uhsussex.ibdnursingservice@nhs.net 01273 664427 (answerphone service)



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KNOWLEDGE IS POWER!

- Visit our website for lots of useful information on IBD: uhsussex.nhs.uk/services/ibd or scan this QR code:
- Get more information from trusted resources like **Crohn's & Colitis UK** and **IBDmate**.
- Join a local support group: crohnsandcolitis.org.uk



KNOW YOUR FLARE TRIGGERS

- Certain things may worsen symptoms - avoid these if you can.
- Common triggers include **alcohol, certain foods, and stress**, but everyone is different.

DIET

- Try to eat a **healthy and balanced diet**.
- Don't skip meals to try to control symptoms.
- Don't make big changes to your diet or cut out whole food groups unless advised to by a healthcare professional.

During a flare:

- Try eating **small meals more regularly**.
- Drink **plenty of fluids**.
- Temporarily **reduce the amount of fibre** you eat.
→ Take a look at our 'Diet and IBD' section on our website.

STRESS AND FATIGUE

- Try to make time to **rest, relax and move your body**.
- If stress or fatigue feels overwhelming, seek help
→ Take a look at our 'General info for IBD' section on our website.

STAYING SAFE

MEDICATION SAFETY

- Don't stop or change any IBD treatment** without speaking to a healthcare professional. Always let your IBD team know about any changes.
- If you're prescribed **steroids**, let your IBD team know as **soon as possible**.
- Avoid **NSAIDs** like **ibuprofen, aspirin, diclofenac and naproxen** as these can worsen gut inflammation.

INFECTION PRECAUTION

- If you get an infection (e.g. cold, flu, COVID), take a look at our '**Active Infections**' section on our website.



BE PREPARED

- Get a '**Can't Wait!**' card and **RADAR** key to access disabled toilets.
→ Take a look at our '**General info for IBD**' section on our website.



If you have any questions or concerns contact:
uhsussex.ibdnursingservice@nhs.net
01273 664427 (answerphone service)
Available Monday – Friday 9am-4pm