

Fecal transplant studied for kids with bowel disease

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Symptoms of ulcerative colitis disappeared for one-third of patients after process.

(HealthDay)—Fecal transplantation—an innovative enema treatment—may help reduce or eliminate symptoms of ulcerative colitis in most children and young adults, according to a small study.

The process, formally called fecal microbial transplantation, involves placing stool from a healthy donor into a recipient's [intestines](#) in order to restore healthy bacteria.

The early clinical trial—the first in the United States to study the process in children—was conducted by a team at Helen DeVos Children's Hospital in Grand Rapids, Mich.

The study included 10 participants, aged 7 to 20 years, with mild to moderate ulcerative colitis. Enemas were used to give the patients lab-prepared [stool samples](#) from a healthy adult donor. Each patient received five such treatments within one week.

Seventy-eight percent of the patients had a reduction in ulcerative colitis symptoms within a week, and 67 percent still had reduced symptoms a month after fecal transplantation. Thirty-three percent of the patients no longer had any symptoms of ulcerative colitis after the process.

No serious side effects were noted, according to the study, which was published online and in the June print issue of the *Journal of Pediatric Gastroenterology & Nutrition*.

Ulcerative colitis is a type of inflammatory bowel disease that affects the lining of the large intestine, or colon, and rectum, according to the U.S. National Institutes of Health. Symptoms can include abdominal pain, cramping, bloody diarrhea, pus in the stool, fever, rectal pain, weight loss, nausea, vomiting, joint pain, mouth sores, skin lesions and slow growth in children.

The disease often forces children to miss school and limit their social activities.

Fecal transplantation "has been proposed as a promising new treatment option for recurrent *C. difficile* infection and possibly for ulcerative colitis," lead investigator and pediatric gastroenterologist Dr. Sachin Kunde said in a hospital news release.

"We believe that the procedure may restore 'abnormal' [bacteria](#) to 'normal' in patients with ulcerative colitis," Kunde said. "Our short-term study looked at the safety and tolerability of [fecal microbial transplantation] for these patients."

Larger and longer studies are needed before the process could be recommended for clinical practice, the researchers said.

As many as 700,000 Americans have [ulcerative colitis](#), and approximately 25 percent are diagnosed during childhood, according to the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation. Kunde said fecal transplantation could offer patients a natural, inexpensive treatment option.

More information: The U.S. National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases has more about [ulcerative colitis](#).

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