

Liquid nutrition may benefit children with Crohn's disease

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An analysis of published studies indicates that exclusive enteral nutrition (EEN)—when individuals receive only liquid nutrition—may be an effective treatment for children with Crohn's disease. The findings are published in *Alimentary Pharmacology & Therapeutics*.

Crohn's disease—a chronic inflammatory bowel disease—is often treated with steroids, which are associated with possible serious long-term side effects such as bone thinning, loss of [muscle mass](#), weight gain, and an increased risk of infection. These effects are especially concerning in [children](#).

Researchers who examined studies that compared EEN with steroids in children with active Crohn's disease found that EEN was just as effective as steroids in controlling the inflammation of Crohn's disease whether during the first attack or a relapse. In addition, healing of the intestine was over 4-times more likely in the EEN patients than in those given [steroids](#).

"The most common question in a newly diagnosed patient is 'what should I eat?' with the idea that they are motivated to make the necessary changes to get control of their Crohn's," said Dr. Arun Swaminath, lead author of the analysis. "This would be an ideal time to discuss this treatment option, especially in pediatric populations, but it does require a motivated patient and a supportive team—typically composed of a dietician, nurse, and physician, and often, family/peer supporters—to make it all happen."

More information: A. Swaminath et al. Systematic review with meta-analysis: enteral nutrition therapy for the induction of remission in paediatric Crohn's disease, *Alimentary Pharmacology & Therapeutics* (2017). [DOI: 10.1111/apt.14253](https://doi.org/10.1111/apt.14253)

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