

Keep your gut healthy and avoid inflammatory disease, says gastroenterologist

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Credit: Sora Shimazaki from Pexels

A healthy gut helps lower your risk of developing inflammatory diseases such as inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), a chronic condition that causes inflammation in the digestive tract.

Victor Chedid, M.D., a gastroenterologist and IBD expert at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, offers tips people can take to keep their gut healthy and [inflammatory diseases](#) at bay.

Dr. Chedid recommends a four-pronged approach to gut health.

"Paying attention to all these factors is essential for maintaining gut health," Dr. Chedid says.

Maintaining gut health is important, especially when a person is dealing with [inflammatory bowel disease](#). There are two main types of IBD: Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

IBD is a global disease with about 6–8 million cases worldwide. The prevalence of Crohn's disease and [ulcerative colitis](#) is on the rise in African countries, the Middle East and the Asia Pacific region.

"That's why we have to increase awareness and make sure that people seek care when they have symptoms so that they can get the diagnosis and care that is appropriate for them," Dr. Chedid says.

There is no cure for IBD, but a variety of treatments exist to help patients achieve remission. These include [anti-inflammatory drugs](#), immune system suppressors, biologics, antibiotics and surgery.

Diarrhea and [rectal bleeding](#) are common symptoms, but these symptoms can make people with IBD feel ashamed and hesitant to seek support. Dr. Chedid says families can play a crucial role in helping their loved ones manage IBD.

"It's about being there for them, recognizing that they're not always going to be themselves at all times," Dr. Chedid says. "There will be times when they feel down, are in pain or don't want to eat what you

cook. Don't be offended. You just need to be there for them."

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