Crohn’s Disease

What Is Crohn’s Disease?

Crohn’s disease is a long-term condition that causes inflammation in your digestive system, known as inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). It can affect any part of the gastrointestinal (GI) tract, but it is most commonly found in the small intestine or colon. Symptoms can range from mild to severe and often occur in cycles of flare-ups and remissions. At Birmingham Gastroenterology Clinic, we are here to help diagnose and manage Crohn’s disease with expert care tailored to your needs.

What Causes Crohn’s Disease?

The exact cause of Crohn’s disease remains unknown, but it’s believed to be a combination of factors, including:

- **Immune system issues**: An overactive immune response can mistakenly attack your own digestive system, causing inflammation
- **Genetics**: A family history of Crohn’s disease can increase your risk
- **Environmental triggers**: Smoking, stress, and certain infections may contribute to flare-ups

While there’s currently no cure for Crohn’s disease, effective treatments and lifestyle changes can help manage symptoms and prevent complications.

What Are The Symptoms Of Crohn’s Disease?

Crohn’s disease symptoms vary from person to person, depending on the affected part of the digestive tract. Common symptoms include:

- Persistent diarrhoea, sometimes with blood
- Abdominal pain or cramping, often after eating
- Fatigue or low energy levels
- Unexplained weight loss
- Reduced appetite or feeling bloated
- Mouth ulcers
- Anal issues, such as fissures, abscesses, or fistulas

Some people may experience additional symptoms, such as fever, joint pain, or skin rashes. Crohn’s disease often presents in flare-ups, with symptoms improving during periods of remission.

When To Seek Urgent Medical Advice

While Crohn's disease can usually be managed, certain symptoms require immediate attention. Seek urgent help if you experience:

- Severe abdominal pain that doesn't improve
- High fever alongside digestive symptoms
- Persistent vomiting
- Significant weight loss without explanation
- Blood in your stool

These symptoms could indicate complications, such as bowel obstruction or infection, and should be addressed promptly.

How Is Crohn's Disease Diagnosed?

At Birmingham Gastroenterology Clinic, we use advanced diagnostic tools to identify Crohn's disease and assess its severity. Tests may include:

- **Upper GI endoscopy or colonoscopy**: A camera is used to examine your digestive tract for inflammation, ulcers, or other signs of Crohn's disease. Biopsies may also be taken
- **MRI or CT scans**: These provide detailed images of your intestines to detect inflammation or complications
- **Blood tests**: To check for signs of anaemia, inflammation, or infection
- **Stool tests**: To detect infections or markers of inflammation

Accurate diagnosis is essential to create an effective treatment plan tailored to your needs.

How Is Crohn's Disease Treated?

While there's no one-size-fits-all approach, treatment focuses on reducing inflammation, managing symptoms, and preventing complications. Options include:

- **Medications**:
  - Anti-inflammatory drugs (e.g., corticosteroids) to reduce inflammation during flare-ups
  - Immunosuppressants to regulate your immune response
  - Biologic therapies to target specific parts of your immune system

- **Dietary adjustments**: Working with a dietitian to avoid trigger foods and maintain proper nutrition, especially during flare-ups

- **Surgery**: In severe cases, surgery may be needed to remove damaged parts of the digestive tract or treat complications like strictures or abscesses

- **Lifestyle changes**: Quitting smoking, managing stress, and maintaining a balanced diet can improve your overall health and reduce flare-ups

Your consultant will work with you to develop a personalised treatment plan based on your symptoms and disease severity.

Why Choose Birmingham Gastroenterology Clinic?

At Birmingham Gastroenterology Clinic, we specialise in diagnosing and managing Crohn's disease using the latest technology and evidence-based treatments. Our team of experienced gastroenterologists offers a compassionate, patient-centred approach to ensure you receive the best possible care. Whether you need routine monitoring or specialised procedures, we're here to support you every step of the way.

Contact Us

If you're experiencing symptoms of Crohn's disease or need help managing your condition, contact Birmingham Gastroenterology Clinic today to book a consultation. Early diagnosis and tailored care can make a significant difference in improving your quality of life and controlling your symptoms.