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Medical review Drugs.com. Last updated on January 27, 2020. What is ulcerative colitis? Ulcerative colitis is an inflammatory disease. It usually starts in the rectum and then deteriorates to attract some or all of the colon. Ulcerative colitis is a lifelong condition. Ulcerative colitis can begin with the breakdown of the lining of the intestines. Inside the intestines, with its overcooked food, contains trillions of bacteria. Typically, the intestinal mucosa keeps these bacteria from causing infection to the intestinal wall. As long as bacteria are contained, they remain invisible to your immune cells. They don't cause reactions. But when the lining of the intestine fails, bacteria that are usually harmless can activate your immune system. Ulcerative colitis is an autoimmune disease. This means that the immune system, which is supposed to attack other things that get inside our body, instead attacks part of the body. With ulcerative colitis, gut bacteria provoke the immune system to attack the intestinal wall, damaging the intestines. There is also evidence that an unusually large or small number of certain types of bacteria that normally live in everyone's gut can make the intestines vulnerable to ulcerative colitis. Once the inflammation of the intestines has started, it can continue. It continues even if the immune system stops being exposed to gut bacteria. Ulcerative colitis affects the inner lining of the rectum and colon. This leads to lining: Wear away in spots (leaving ulcers) bleeding Ooze muddy mucus or pilled Sometimes, other parts of the body suffer from inflammation. These include eyes, skin, liver, back and joints. The disease is not contagious. Contact with another person cannot spread the disease. Ulcerative colitis usually begins to cause symptoms between the ages of 15 and 40. Ulcerative colitis significantly increases the risk of colon cancer. Symptoms of ulcerative colitis vary. Some people with the disease have a spike in symptoms every few months. Other symptoms all the time. Some, fortunately, symptoms occur only in rare cases. Typical symptoms include: Stomach pain cramps, especially in the lower abdomen Bloody diarrhea, often containing plying or mucus Little warning before you need to have a bowel movement Need to wake up from sleep to have bowel movements ulcerative colitis can also cause: Fever Fatigue Reducing Appetite Weight Loss Fluids, which can lead to dehydration Diagnosis Both treatments use a small camera and light to view the insides of the colon. A biopsy can be done during any procedure. Biopsy Tissue samples are trimmed from the Bowel. They can be considered for signs of inflammation. Many temporary conditions, such as infections, cause the same symptoms as ulcerative colitis. This way, your doctor will want to check your stool for other conditions such as bacterial infection or parasitic infection. Blood tests can also be done to check for anemia (low levels of red blood cells) or low iron levels. They can occur with ulcerative colitis. Blood tests can be done to detect inflammation, and check on your liver. Inflammation of the liver ducts occurs in some people with ulcerative colitis. The expected duration of ulcerative colitis is a lifelong condition if the colon is surgically removed. Most people with ulcerative colitis do not have their colon removed. This is because their symptoms can be controlled by medication. Or, they have symptoms only once in a while. In ulcerative colitis, inflammation is not always active. There may be long breaks between symptoms. Every time ulcerative colitis acts up, the symptoms can last for weeks or months. Often these outbreaks are separated by months or years of good health without symptoms. Some people notice that some foods exacerbate their symptoms. By managing their diet, these people can increase the time between outbreaks. Prevention There is no way to prevent ulcerative colitis. However, some people may reduce the frequency of symptoms. They do this by avoiding foods that seem to provoke flashes. For some people with ulcerative colitis, this includes spicy foods and dairy products. If you have ulcerative colitis, you can reduce the loss it takes on your body. To do this, eat a well-balanced, nutritious diet, especially if you don't have symptoms such as poor appetite and nausea that make it difficult to eat. By doing so, you can reduce complications from malnutrition such as weight loss or low blood levels. Ulcerative colitis increases the risk of colon cancer. People with extensive inflammation throughout the colon have the highest risk. It is important that your colon is checked frequently for early signs of cancer. Ask your doctor how often you should have a colonoscopy. Poor diet or the effect of colitis medications can lead to osteoporosis. This disease weakens bones and can lead to bone rupture. Osteoporosis can be prevented with medication, adequate exercise, calcium and vitamin D. If you have ulcerative colitis, discuss osteoporosis with your doctor. Treatment Medications medications are very effective for improving the symptoms of ulcerative colitis. Most drugs used work to prevent inflammation in the gut. A group of anti-inflammatory drugs called aminosalicylates are usually tried in the first place. medications are chemically linked to aspirin. They suppress inflammation in the intestines and joints. They are given: mouth-like tablets directly into the rectum like a suppository. Suppository is a wax capsule. As an enema (a liquid that is squeezed out of a bag or bottle into the rectum) Aminosalicylates clear up the symptoms in most people. But you may need to get treatment within three to six weeks before you are free of symptoms. Other, more powerful anti-inflammatory drugs are prescribed when the disease is very active or it cannot be controlled with aminosalicylate. Often, the first choice is an anti-inflammatory drug corticosteroids such as prednison or steroid foam. When these drugs are not effective, 6-mercaptopurine, azathioprine, cyclosporine or antitumor necrosis factor (e.g. infliximab) may be recommended. Doctors are always concerned about side effects from anti-inflammatory and immune-suppressing drugs, especially the increased risk of infection. Therefore, the goal is to reduce the dose and then stop the anti-inflammatory drug once the disease is under control. You can also be given medication to reduce painful colon cramps. When symptoms are severe or when diarrhea causes dehydration, you may need to be hospitalized to obtain intravenous fluids, steroids, antibiotics and sometimes intravenous nutrition while the colon is recovering. Surgery surgery is used in people who have: Severe symptoms that are not controlled by medications Unacceptable side effects from medications Very high risk of colon cancer due to extensive inflammation in the entire colon After some operations, defecation will have to leave the body through a hole in the abdominal wall. This hole is called a stoma. Stoma replaces the function of the rectum. It can be connected to a drainage bag. The stoma can be used temporarily or permanently. New surgical techniques allow many patients to retain the muscular layer of the rectum while also removing the rectal lining. This type of surgery has a cosmetic advantage. And, it allows bowel movements to pass through the rectum. Bowel movements are close to normal, except that they are more frequent and contain more fluid. When calling a professional new or changing symptoms often means that additional treatment is needed. People who have ulcerative colitis should be in frequent contact with their doctors. The common symptoms that require immediate medical attention are: A fever that can indicate an infection or rupture of the bowel Severe bleeding from the rectum is serious, but rarely, a complication called a toxic megacolon. This results in when the inflammation of the colon is so severe that it stops the movement of the colon. Megacolon causes swelling of the abdomen. This can cause vomiting or abdominal pain and bloating. Megacolon requires emergency treatment, often surgery. The prognosis of ulcerative colitis can affect people very differently. Many people only have a soft soft They do not require continuous medication treatment. Others may need multiple medications or surgery. If it is not treated surgically, the disease is a lifelong condition. Ulcerative colitis requires people to pay special attention to their health needs. They should also often seek medical attention. But most people can have a normal job and a productive life. It may be helpful for a person newly diagnosed with ulcerative colitis to join a support group for others with the disease. Learn more about ulcerative colitis Associated DrugsIBM Watson MicromedexMayo Clinic Help Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Disorders More InformationAll consult your health care provider to ensure the information displayed on this page relates to your personal circumstances. Medical failure Shelby DohertyShelby Doherty began treatment for ulcerative colitis about four years ago. She was diagnosed after going to a gastroenterologist due to significant blood loss through her stool. The doctor wrote me a prescription and that's it,' she says. About six months later, Doherty was feeling good. But, not realizing the importance of sticking to her ulcerative colitis treatment, she stopped taking medication. It was a hassle to take these pills every day - they were great, Doherty, now 26, said of the 5-amicalicilate (5-ASA) medication. She didn't realize she should be on drugs forever to help prevent symptoms from happening again. I didn't know how severe ulcerative colitis could be, she says. Doherty was fine for about a year, but then her ulcerative colitis symptoms returned with a vengeance. For two years she struggled with ever-deteriorating urgency, abdominal pain and blood loss. When her ulcerative colitis symptoms were at its worst, she spent three days in a row in bed, did not eat or drink and barely moved. She could neither sit nor keep her eyes open. Her boyfriend finally insisted on going to the emergency room. I was admitted that night and stayed for nine nights, Doherty said. I was very sick. Her veins were so fragile and she was so dehydrated that nurses could barely draw blood. A hospital gastroenterologist put her back on a 5-ASA medication and a course of corticosteroids to get her system back on track and her ulcerative colitis symptoms under control. It took about six months to get back to feeling like me again, says Doherty. As the medication keeps ulcerative colitis in BayTo to control ulcerative colitis symptoms and reduce inflammation, medication maintenance is usually the rule. Ulcerative colitis is a chronic disease, says Cheng Chang, MBBS, at Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center in Columbus. There's no cure for ulcers. except for the operation. However, the prospects are good for people with ulcerative colitis who follow an effective treatment regimen. About 48 percent of people with ulcerative colitis are in remission, and only about 30 percent of those in remission are likely to outbreak next year, according to the Crohn's and Colit Foundation Of America.The catch: A person with ulcerative colitis should remain on medication to treat a chronic disease, says Dr. Chang. If you stop taking medication and outbreak, it may be harder to get ulcerative colitis back under control. With only intermittent use, you may have an adverse reaction or your medications may lose their effectiveness, he says. If you take ulcerative colitis medications fight, talk to your doctor. Depending on the cause, different types of care may be available, says Chang. Staying a course with ulcerative colitis TreatmentOverall, Doherty feels pretty good. Good days are superior to bad days, she says. And if she ever has the temptation to stop ulcerative colitis, she's just thinking about that time in the hospital. I remind myself how important it is, she says. I take this first thing when I wake up so I don't forget. Doherty also stresses the importance of having a strong support system. This includes loved ones along with other people with ulcerative colitis with whom you can share what you are going through and call if you need help. Help.

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