

Ulcerative colitis can cause abdominal pain, frequent diarrhea, unexpected weight loss, and other disruptive symptoms. At Pioneer GI Clinic in Anchorage, Alaska, the knowledgeable board-certified gastroenterologists know how difficult ulcerative colitis symptoms can be. They're ready to guide you through the diagnostic and treatment planning process with empathy and superior care, so call the office to make your appointment now.

What is ulcerative colitis?

Ulcerative colitis is an inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) that causes inflammation and irritation within the innermost lining of your large intestine. This leads to tiny sores inside your large intestine, which triggers a number of very uncomfortable symptoms.

What are the symptoms of ulcerative colitis?

Some of the most common symptoms of ulcerative colitis are:

- Loose stools (diarrhea)
- Bloody stools
- Abdominal pain
- Increased bowel urgency
- Feeling of discomfort or fullness, even after bowel movements
- Fever
- Dehydration
- Loss of appetite
- Unexpected weight loss
- Mouth or skin rashes

Symptoms of ulcerative colitis also occur with several other disorders and diseases, including Crohn's disease (the other major type of IBD), irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), and celiac disease.

Ulcerative colitis symptoms come and go. You may have a flare-up and then experience a long period (months or even years) of symptom-free remission. The disease can be different for every person.

How are ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease different?

Ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease are the two leading types of IBD, and they cause similar symptoms, often leading to confusion. However, there are some clear differences between the two.

While ulcerative colitis causes localized large intestine inflammation and affects only the innermost intestinal lining, Crohn's disease can cause inflammation and irritation anywhere in the gastrointestinal tract, and it can extend into deeper tissue layers as well.

Up to 10% of all people with IBD have symptoms of both ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease. This is called IBD-unclassified (U).

What causes ulcerative colitis?

Medical experts are still uncertain about the exact causes of ulcerative colitis. But it's believed that several different factors, including genetics, immune system problems, and environmental factors, may all contribute.

What is the best treatment for ulcerative colitis?

Treatment can help you get into a long-lasting remission. Common medications for ulcerative colitis include anti-inflammatories, immunosuppressants, and biologics, as well as medications like antidiarrheals to manage your symptoms effectively.

If you don't respond to medication, if medication causes severe side effects, or if you develop a threatening condition like colon cancer, you could be a good candidate for surgery.

Total removal of the large intestine and rectum can cure ulcerative colitis. There are a few surgical options, and Pioneer GI Clinic recommends the treatment that is best for your health, age, lifestyle, and individual needs.

To learn more about how you can reach and maintain ulcerative colitis remission, call Pioneer GI Clinic.