



Malnutrition in IBD

Children with IBD are closely monitored for poor growth and malnutrition. Growth is assessed by measuring a child's height, weight and body mass index (BMI). These measurements are taken at every visit to the gastroenterologist and are plotted on your child's growth chart.

Growth charts show standard data for sex and age, and include lines that represent the percentiles for height, weight and BMI. Your child's plots will be watched over time, with inadequate growth showing as drops in percentiles. Assessing growth in children with IBD is complicated, but you can be sure that your child's development will be carefully followed by their gastroenterologist and IBD team.

Malnourished children often fail to grow well, and will also experience other side effects such as worsening IBD symptoms, weaker immunity, muscle weakness and extreme tiredness.

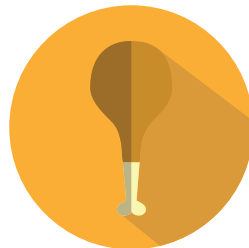
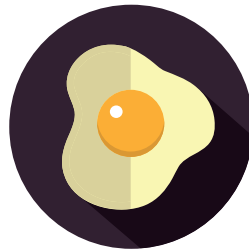
Untreated IBD and IBD-related flares increase your child's risk of malnutrition. Many factors can contribute to poor nutritional status, such as:

- **poor appetite,**
- **active disease in the gut,**
- **bacterial overgrowth,**
- **diarrhea, blood and fistulas,**
- **bowel movements that increase pain,**
- **difficulty chewing or swallowing due to oral ulcers,**
- **changes in taste associated with medicines and fear of eating.**

ROBBIE'S RAINBOW MISSION

Our mission is to help improve the health and quality of life of children and teens living with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis (IBD).

We are committed to helping guide and support IBD families, teens and children by providing access to critical treatments and care, building educational resources and patient advocacy.



Here are some tips to help prevent malnutrition:

- **Make sure your child is taking his or her treatment.**
- **Encourage eating nutritiously dense foods which provide important proteins, fibre, vitamins and antioxidants**
- **Listen to your child and offer foods that don't cause discomfort or worsen GI symptoms. If your child refuses to eat certain foods, avoid forcing the issue as this can increase everyone's stress and hurt your child's relationship with food.**
- **Skipping meals, especially breakfast, is a bad habit. Encourage your child to eat smaller, more frequent meals to minimize GI symptoms but meet nutritional goals.**
- **Include protein with each meal or snack. Good sources of protein include meat, poultry, fish, beans, peas, lentils, eggs and dairy.**
- **Consider a complete multivitamin, especially if their diet is lacking in fruits and vegetables.**

Nutritious drinks can be a good option if GI symptoms interfere with eating meals. Create a nutrient-packed smoothie.

It's important to understand that even with the best efforts, children with IBD can still develop malnutrition. If you notice signs of poor nutrition that are not improving, see your child's doctor immediately.

Remember: **remission supports nutrition and nutrition supports remission!**

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