



# managing pain in IBD

Pain is a common problem among patients with IBD, whether it's related to the disease itself (e.g., abdominal pain) or to medical tests and treatments. Pain is no fun for kids or their families, and can often cause more fear and distress than the actual disease itself. Fortunately, there are lots of things that children and their parents can do to help manage any discomfort associated with IBD.

*When it comes to pain management, we often refer to the three P's:*

## Physical Psychological Pharmacological

*We'll give you some examples of each:*

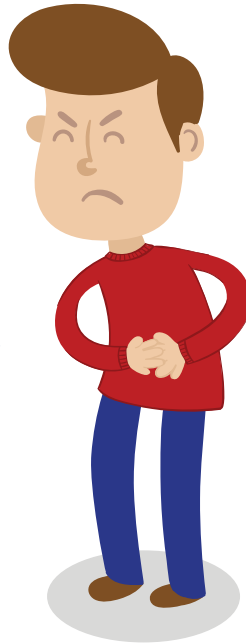
### Physical

Physical strategies include positioning, massage and exercising. Yoga is one example of a physical strategy that can help with IBD-associated pain.

### Psychological

Psychological strategies include techniques such as relaxation, which can be achieved by taking deep breaths, using your imagination to take you to a peaceful place or gradually tensing and relaxing muscles. Other effective psychological strategies for pain management include distraction (i.e., taking your mind off things by thinking about or doing something more pleasant) and positive self-talk (i.e., turning negative thoughts into positive ones by repeating statements like: "I can deal with this pain").

Mindfulness is another way to manage discomfort. This involves accepting the feelings, thoughts and sensations that are occurring in the moment, and not getting upset about them.



### Pharmacological

Pharmacological strategies are those that involve medication. If your pain is not well controlled, you should talk to your doctor about whether there are medications that can help you. If you experience a lot of pain from needles or procedures, for example, you might find it helpful to use a topical anesthetic cream before the procedure to help numb the area.

Parents play an important role in helping children with IBD to manage their pain. Parents can help make sure their child's pain is assessed regularly and that poorly controlled pain is followed up. Pain is not just a part of life with IBD. There is almost always something more that can be done to help children with IBD feel more comfortable.

The Centre for Pediatric Pain Research is dedicated to helping make sure that evidence about children's pain gets to families who need and can use it.

Check out: [#itdoesnthavetohurt](https://www.instagram.com/itdoesnthavetohurt) campaign and [www.itdoesnthavetohurt.ca](http://www.itdoesnthavetohurt.ca) to learn more.

You will also find helpful videos, including one for parents that gives easy pain-management tips for shots and needles.

### 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.



Help us help kids living with IBD.  
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