



Mindfulness in IBD

“Mindfulness” is a psychological approach that is growing in popularity with those managing chronic diseases. It involves becoming more aware of our thoughts, feelings and physical sensations at the very moment they occur, and not reacting to them out of habit.

Mindfulness involves some form of quiet meditation or relaxation. There is a growing body of research that shows that mindfulness can help children pay attention, calm down when they are upset and make better decisions. It can also help children cope with the pain and distress of having a medical condition such as IBD.



Try the following mindfulness strategies to help guide you and your child:

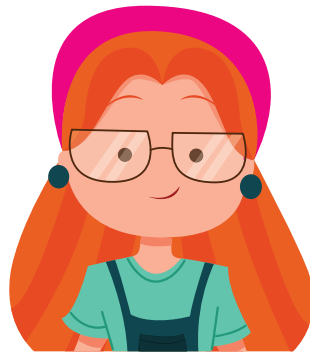
Find five to 10 minutes each day for you and your child to start with some meditation. Try to incorporate mindfulness into your daily activities. For example, focus on the taste and texture when eating a grape or concentrate on the sights and sounds around you when walking to school or home.

Take your time. Not all kids are interested in the concept. Some will prefer to distract themselves rather than to be aware, especially during times of stress. You can try lots of activities to introduce and encourage mindfulness with your children. For example, encourage your children to use their superhero powers (e.g., their “Spidey-senses”) to pay attention to sights and sounds that they wouldn’t normally notice.

Encourage your children to give you a personal “weather report” to help describe their feelings in the moment - are they feeling sunny, rainy or foggy? To help your children focus on deep breathing, have them imagine that their tummy is a beach ball that they have to gradually inflate and deflate.

Keep it simple

Mindfulness is a big concept for kids to understand. However, mindfulness is really just awareness - awareness of thoughts, feelings and sensations; in fact, anything that is happening around you right now. Mindfulness does need to be practiced regularly, so choose a time, perhaps at the end of the day, when distractions are minimal and start a routine.



Remember, children model what they see. If you would like to encourage mindfulness in your children, show them how you are practicing mindfulness in your day-to-day life and know that this is a skill, which requires patience and practice. But with patience and practice, you can discover a host of opportunities for creativity and self-discovery.

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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.



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