Dear Alice,

Do you know anything about the disease Crohn's? If you do, any latest research information?

?Stomach ache

Answer

Dear Stomach ache,

Crohn's disease is a lifelong condition characterized by inflammation and ulceration of the gastrointestinal tract due to an abnormal immune response. Symptoms include persistent diarrhea, painful abdominal cramps, fever, and occasional rectal bleeding. Common complications include deep ulcers called fistulas and malnutrition due to poor absorption of nutrients. Crohn's disease most commonly affects adolescents, young adults, and people over 60 years, and tends to run in families. The causes of Crohn's disease are unclear, but researchers believe it is caused by an interaction of genetic and environmental factors.

Though Crohn's disease does not have a cure yet, medical professionals work closely with patients to both manage symptoms as well as treat complications. Four types of drugs are used to help control symptoms: antibiotics, anti-inflammatories, corticosteroids, and immune modifiers. During flare-ups, soft, bland foods may help minimize or prevent discomfort. While surgery does not cure the disease, removal of damaged portions of the intestine may be performed to provide additional relief if medications are no longer effective.

Although Crohn's disease requires a specialist's close supervision, as well as periodic hospitalizations, most people with Crohn's lead full, active lives. Researchers continue to seek ways to improve the health of those with this disease; recent research and info about support groups can be found at the Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of America web site.

Take care,

Alice!

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General Health
Stomach & Other Gastrointestinal Grumblings

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