

A Guide to Being Open About Your Condition

WHEN YOU ARE LIVING WITH ULCERATIVE COLITIS (UC), you may not want to talk about your symptoms with anyone, even your close friends and family. It is important to always talk to your doctor about your symptoms or if you have any questions.

The thing is, keeping your condition to yourself only adds to the stress you may already be feeling because of your symptoms. It can make you feel isolated, and deprive you of a support system that could help you live better with your UC.

This guide will provide some suggestions on how to feel more comfortable opening up about your UC, and help you express to others the best ways they can help you.



Go at your own pace

- ▶ Don't feel pressured to talk to others about your UC, or reveal details before you are ready. Only you can decide when the time is right, and your friends and family will be there for you when you do.

Educate others...and yourself

- ▶ If you want to talk to people about UC, you should first understand the condition so you can better explain what you are experiencing.



The **Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America** (www.ccfa.org) is a great source of information about UC.

- ▶ Tell your friends and family how the symptoms of UC can affect you. You don't have to go into too much detail if you don't want to; just let them know what to expect and be honest about your feelings.



Express yourself

- ▶ Think about what level of support you want from others. Then be open and honest about your feelings.

On the following pages, you will find exercises to help you better understand your feelings about UC, and ways to communicate them to your friends and family.

How

OTHERS CAN HELP ME

Be Clear About What You Need

EVERYONE NEEDS HELP FROM TIME TO TIME, and people with UC are no different. But not everyone wants or needs the same level of support. Some may want their loved ones to play an active role in managing their UC, while others may want to handle most issues themselves.

Use this space to write down the ways your friends and family can help you live with your UC.

- ▶ Similar to the previous page, you can circle some of the samples given, write in your own, or add pictures that represent how you feel.



I NEED A SHOULDER TO CRY ON

I NEED AN EXERCISE BUDDY

I WANT SOMEONE TO GO TO THE DOCTOR WITH ME

I NEED YOU TO GIVE ME SOME SPACE

I NEED YOU TO BE PATIENT

I WANT SOMEONE WHO IS POSITIVE

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You can share this page with your loved ones to show them how you feel, or just refer to it as you speak with them yourself.