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## ULCERATIVE COLITIS

### What is ulcerative colitis?

This is an inflammatory bowel disease that affects the large bowel only. The small bowel is never affected.

### What causes ulcerative colitis?

Generally the cause is unknown. There are various theories from infection, autoimmune and genetic abnormalities.

### Who treats ulcerative colitis disease?

Most patients are managed by gastroenterologists not surgeons. Colorectal surgeons are involved with specific surgical problems.

### What are the symptoms?

There might be diarrhoea, bleeding, passage of mucus and abdominal pain. Sometimes there are urgent problems like severe bleeding, bowel obstruction or uncontrolled diarrhoea

### What is the treatment?

Mostly the treatment is medical drugs administered by gastroenterologists. Surgery is required for complicated disease and emergencies. Treatment is multidisciplinary with cooperation between surgeons and gastroenterologists.

### What sorts of operations are required?

Patients needing surgery need part or all the colon removed. A stoma bag is usually required.

### Can ulcerative colitis be cured?

Surgery is curative because all the colon is removed. Most patients don't need surgery and are better managed with medications.