

# Beyond the Gut: Using Wellness to Manage Symptoms of Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)

Inflammation is one of the drivers of chronic immune disorders like IBD. You may be feeling sad, frustrated, and/or anxious with your IBD symptoms disrupting everyday life. Research shows that these negative emotions can increase your body's level of inflammation, whereas positive changes that promote well-being can help to decrease inflammation.

Wellness is defined as the optimal state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Practicing wellness behaviors may have anti-inflammatory effects on the body, which may have significant benefits. These behaviors can be categorized into 5 main groups: exercise, sleep, nutrition, mindfulness, and social connectedness.

Working with your healthcare provider, brainstorm and list ways you can implement these positive changes to increase your overall wellness.



## Exercise

Regular exercise can improve immune response and bone density

One exercise I would like to make time for is:



## Sleep

Improving sleep quality can reduce the risk of IBD disease activity

I can create a healthy sleeping environment by:



## Nutrition

Plant-based and Mediterranean diets may protect against inflammation

One new healthy food I would like to try is:



## Mindfulness

Self-awareness and meditation can reduce stress and inflammation

Two of my character strengths are:



## Social connectedness

Social isolation has been linked to worsening bowel symptoms of IBD

A new social activity I would like to try is:

The mind and body are connected in many ways, and lifestyle choices can directly impact your physical and mental health. Using the wellness principles you have identified, come up with specific, measurable goals and track them throughout the week. This tracker (shown below) will help you incorporate new healthy habits and lifestyle changes that can aid in your IBD management. To help get you started, a few wellness behaviors that are supported by research to aid in reducing inflammation have been provided.

What goals do you want to implement to help manage your IBD?	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>Exercise:</b> (eg, go for a walk)							
<b>Sleep:</b> (eg, reduce screen time before bed)							
<b>Nutrition:</b> (eg, log your meals and snacks)							
<b>Mindfulness:</b> (eg, meditate for 10 minutes)							
<b>Social connectedness:</b> (eg, talk to a friend for 15 minutes)							

