

Colitis is inflammation of the colon. It causes painful cramping, diarrhoea, sometimes blood in the stool, and may cause the urge to eliminate (empty the rectum) constantly.

Colitis tends to affect young to early middle-aged people, women more than men.

It may be mild or severe depending on whether the inflammation leads to ulcers: this condition being called **Ulcerative colitis**. (UC)

Causes of non-specific colitis include stress, food allergies and poor eating habits.

Antibiotic-associated colitis: (pseudomembranous colitis) is caused by colonisation of the colon by an organism called *Clostridium difficile*, which may occur after antibiotic therapy. (especially clindamycin): usually it is an acute condition but it may become chronic; treatment is oral vancomycin or metronidazole.