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## Resource 8-1: Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) vs. Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD)

### What Do These Conditions Have in Common?

History of chronically recurring symptoms of abdominal pain, discomfort, urgency, bloating and alterations in bowel habits

### How Do These Conditions Differ?

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)	Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD; ulcerative colitis [UC], Crohn's disease)
Presence of altered GI motility and visceral hyperalgesia Former thought: No structural abnormality Current thought: Microscopic inflammation, altered gut microflora possible contributors	Intestinal ulceration, inflammation, detectable microscopically and macroscopically <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crohn's: mouth to anus</li> <li>• UC: colon only</li> </ul>
Absence of rectal bleeding, fever, weight loss, elevated CRP, ESR; not simply a diagnosis of exclusion but a condition with a broad differential diagnosis	Rectal bleeding, diarrhea, fever, weight loss, laboratory evidence of inflammation (elevated CRP or ESR, others); leukocytosis, especially during flares
Intervention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lifestyle modification, such as diet, fiber, fluids, exercise, according to patient response</li> <li>• Medications as indicated by symptoms (antidiarrheals, promotility agents, select antimicrobials, probiotics) according to patient response</li> </ul>	Intervention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lifestyle modification similar to IBS, recognizing variation in response</li> <li>• Anti-inflammatory medications, including aminosalicylates, systemic or local corticosteroids, as indicated by clinical presentation and response</li> <li>• Biologics, particularly when no response to anti-inflammatory medications</li> <li>• Surgical intervention often needed, as well as careful ongoing monitoring for GI malignancy</li> <li>• Expert consultation is warranted.</li> </ul>
<b>Abbreviations: GI, gastrointestinal; CRP, C-reactive protein; ESR, erythrocyte sedimentation rate.</b>	

Sources: Rowe WA. Inflammatory Bowel Disease, available at <https://emedicine.medscape.com/article/179037-overview>  
Lehrer JK. Irritable Bowel Syndrome, available at <https://emedicine.medscape.com/article/180389-overview>

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