

Federal Funding for Inflammatory Bowel Disease Research

Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD)—including Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis—is a chronic, debilitating condition affecting 1 in 100 Americans and more than 10 million people worldwide, with incidence rising steadily in both children and adults. National Institutes of Health (NIH) funded research has significantly advanced our understanding of IBD's complex causes, including the interplay of genetics, the gut microbiome, diet, and environmental factors. This knowledge is essential for developing more effective therapies, disease detection and – hopefully - preventing these diseases from impacting anyone in the future. Current and recent NIH research into IBD is focused on:

Understanding Disease Mechanisms

- **Genetics:** NIH research has identified genetic factors that increase susceptibility to IBD which can help identify individuals at higher risk and tailor treatment strategies.
- **Gut Microbiome:** NIH research has highlighted the critical role of the balance of bacteria and other microbes in the gut in IBD development and progression.
- **Diet:** NIH research is exploring the role of diet (including ultra-processed foods) in triggering or exacerbating IBD and identifying potential disease progression interventions.

Improving Diagnosis and Treatment

- **Novel Therapies:** NIH research is constantly exploring new therapeutic strategies, including biologics, small-molecule drugs, apheresis therapy, and cell-based therapies.
- **Biomarkers:** Identifying biomarkers can identify populations most at risk for developing IBD, lead to earlier and more accurate diagnosis, and improve disease monitoring and treatment response.
- **Personalized Medicine:** By understanding the complex interplay of genetic, environmental, and microbial factors, NIH research is paving the way for treatments targeted to the unique needs of each patient.

We are close to finding the key to preventing IBD, which could spare future generations from ever developing these devastating diseases. Congress should protect and increase investments in NIH's IBD research to turn this hope into a reality.