

# **How to complete your own Harvey-Bradshaw Index.**

**A guide for patients with Crohn's disease.**



**Crohn's disease (CD)** is a chronic illness. This means that although it may not be active, it is always with you.

CD mainly causes inflammation of the small and large intestines, but other organs can be affected including the joints, eyes and skin.

### **Specific symptoms.**

Inflammation of the small and large intestines will cause you a mixture of symptoms.

- You may empty your bowels more often.
- You may have loose or liquid stools
- You may have little warning before going to the toilet (i.e. urgency)
- You may pass blood.
- You may get tummy pain.

Depending on how much, which parts and exactly how the intestines are affected, you might also experience tiredness, weight loss and fever.

Some patients also experience symptoms in other parts of their body.

- Inflammation of the eyes may cause, redness, blurred vision or pain.
- The skin may show rashes that could be red or purple in colour
- The joints can also be affected causing swelling and pain. This most often occurs in the knees, but can also affect other joints such as the elbows, hands and ankles.

### **Treatment.**

Medicines are very effective in treating CD.

A wide variety of types of medicines can be used to control the inflammation. Some are tablets, some are enemas and some are injections under the skin or into a vein.

Surgery is also necessary in some cases.

Treatment of relapse of your symptoms (called a 'flare') may differ from the treatment used to keep your bowels in good health.

Early and correct treatment has been shown to shorten flare-ups and be better for you in the long term.

### **How to measure the activity of Crohn's disease.**

There are a number of ways to check how active your condition is.

Your doctor may examine you, do blood tests, stool tests, x-rays (such as CT or MRI scans) or look inside at the lining of your bowel (using a sigmoidoscopy, colonoscopy or gastroscopy).

In addition your doctor will ask a set of questions to get a detailed idea of how your condition is. These questions have been put together to make the *Harvey-Bradshaw Index*, which is an internationally recognized measure of CD.

### **What can you do?**

It will help both you and your doctor if you answer the same questions to follow your symptoms over time. That way the best treatment can be started at the right time.

An explanation of how to complete these questions is set out on the next few pages.

We suggest you complete the Harvey-Bradshaw Index if;

- you think your condition is getting worse (a 'flare')
- before your next appointment with your medical team.

## The Harvey-Bradshaw Index.

This next section takes you through the 11 questions that make up the Harvey-Bradshaw Index. Answer according to the symptoms you had *yesterday*.

**1. General well-being.** How did you feel about your health yesterday?

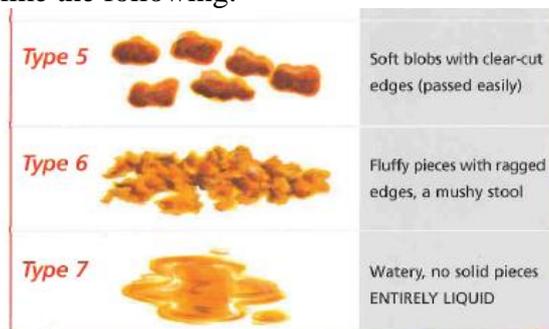
- Very well  (0 points)
- Slightly below par  (1 point)
- Poor  (2 points)
- Very poor  (3 points)
- Terrible  (4 points)

**2. Abdominal pain.** During the last day or night if you had any abdominal pain, how bad was it?

- None  (0 points)
- Mild  (1 point)
- Moderate  (2 points)
- Severe  (3 points)

**3. Number of liquid or soft stools per day.** How many liquid or soft stools did you have yesterday?

Soft or liquid stools look like the following:



Reproduced by kind permission of Dr KW Heaton, Reader in Medicine at the University of Bristol. ©2000 Norgine Limited

**4. Abdominal mass.** Do you have an abdominal mass or lump that you can feel?

- None  (0 points)
- Dubious  (1 point)
- Definite  (2 points)
- Tender  (3 points)

**5. Complications.** Do you have any of the following symptoms apart from your bowels?

**(a). Joint problems;** have you had painful, red or swollen joints?

The most common joints affected are the knees, ankles or toes.

- (1 point)

**(b). Eye problems;** have you had sore, red and swollen eyes?

Other symptoms include blurry vision, sensitivity to light, floaters or increased tear production?

\*



□ (1 point)

**Note:** If you have a **painful red eye** or if you have been diagnosed with **uveitis, episcleritis** or **scleritis** and recognize a flare of your symptoms. **Seek medical help urgently.**

**(c). Mouth problems;** The most common problems are round or oval mouth ulcers which usually appear as round yellowish elevated spots surrounded by a red halo.

\*\*



□ (1 point)

**(d). Skin problems:**

Do you have any deep, purple ulcers, often painful, which usually develop suddenly?

\*\*\*

\*\*



□ (1 point)

Do you have any tender, hot and red bumps which most often affect the skin on the shins, arms and legs?

\*\*



(1 point)

**(e). Perianal problems.**

Do you have any tears or breakdown (crack/ cleft) in the skin of the anus or tender lumps (abscesses) surrounding it?

(1 point)

**(f) Fistula.** Do you have an abnormal opening onto your skin, near your anus (bottom), which may leak fluid or mucus.

**Your Harvey-Bradshaw Index Score is the sum of all the points added together.**

• **Your Total Score :** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact numbers and useful links:**

Your IBD specialist nurse;

Tel:.....

Fax:.....

Email:.....

Your specialist doctor;

Tel:.....

Fax:.....

Email:.....

**Acknowledgments**

Pictures reproduced for educational purposes with permission from:

- \* [www.atlasophthalmology.com](http://www.atlasophthalmology.com)
- \*\* GastroHep. [www.gastrohep.com](http://www.gastrohep.com)
- \*\*\* Dr. Blair Wood.

**This leaflet is endorsed by:**

- The New Zealand Society of Gastroenterology (<http://www.nzsg.org.nz> )

Harvey RF, Bradshaw JM. A simple index of Crohn's-disease activity. *Lancet*. 1980;315(8167):514.

Radvan, J., Cripps, H., Mountford, R. A., Braddon, F. E., & Hughes, A. O. Defecation frequency and timing, and stool form in the general population: a prospective study. *Gut*, 33(6), 818-824.