

"Until recently, I only kinda-sorta knew what IBD was and had never even heard of [Ulcerative Colitis](#). My awakening came a year-and-a-half ago when my little girl suddenly became inexplicably ill. Four doctors in four weeks and numerous tests yielded no answers, so we were referred to a gastroenterologist. After more testing and several procedures, the diagnosis was confirmed...my six-year-old had Ulcerative Colitis.

I couldn't believe that my daughter's strong, healthy body had turned on itself and was now attacking her from within. She was bleeding, in pain, anemic, losing weight and missing weeks of school. My sweet little girl, who up until that point rarely even had sniffles, was suddenly facing an uncertain future and a lifetime of health problems. How did this happen?

As disbelief gave way to sadness I wondered about her future. Would she always be this sick? How would her disease progress? What did the future hold for her?

I also questioned myself. Everything you think you know about yourself as a parent changes when your child gets sick. Did I do something to cause this? Could I have done something to prevent it? Were there earlier signs? *Is this my fault?*

The answer to all of my self-doubting questions was, of course, No. I didn't cause this. My daughter didn't cause this. No one knows why it happened. It just did.

My rational brain tried not to imagine the worst or curse myself for things I had no control over, but my heart was not easily comforted. There was a definite grieving process taking place and I felt broken.

Anyone who has ever grieved knows that eventually, you come to a point where you stop being sad and start to get mad. Really mad. Like mad enough that you want to punch something and maybe you do. That urge to fight is grief's gift, really. It is the spark that helps you pick up the pieces and keep going. And that fight is what inspired us to try an alternative diet. Solutions don't come from wallowing in self-pity and sadness. They take action. They take persistence. They take a healthy dose of optimism. And in my daughter's case...they take groceries.

Shortly after her diagnosis, my daughter's first round of meds failed and she began to flare again. Her doctor suggested stepping up to a stronger drug, the potential side effects of which were disturbing and in many ways, worse than the disease itself. My husband and I struggled with the decision of whether or not to go ahead with our doctor's plan. It's so much easier to live with choices you make for yourself, but not so when making choices for a child who will have to live with the results of those choices no matter the outcome. Ultimately, we weren't ready to take the next step until we had exhausted every other possible treatment option first. We simply couldn't imagine how we'd be able to live with ourselves if we gave her this drug and it made her sicker, unless it was as a last resort. Fortunately, we have a very open-minded doctor who was willing to work with us to test diet therapy in conjunction with a different (milder) medication to see what we could accomplish.

There are many people who don't believe that diet has an impact on IBD symptoms, but there are many who think it does. There is very little research being done and not much to go on other than testimonials from other IBD sufferers who have had success in managing their disease through diet. After some internet (and soul) searching and with a heavy dose of optimism laced with skepticism, we (as a family) decided to embrace an IBD diet called the [Specific Carbohydrate Diet](#). As it turned out, the diet worked better than we could have hoped for. After eight months on SCD, we were able to take our daughter off all medication and kept her in remission with diet alone for another eight months. Unfortunately, she did flare in December, so we are back to some medication, but we are hopeful that it will only be for a month to get things back under control.

I know everyone is different, but this diet does work for many people. My hope for people who read this is that they at least consider the option. It's worth a shot and you won't know until you try. :)