

Crohn's & Colitis Foundation Launches Website Empowering Patients to Better Manage Disease

Features tools to help patients manage risks and benefits of disease-related decisions

Coping with Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis—collectively known as inflammatory bowel disease (IBD)—chronic and often debilitating digestive diseases that affect over 1.4 million Americans—is a journey of choices. To help educate patients on the right choices to make for themselves, the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America (CCFA), with support from Abbott, has launched a new interactive web site, IBDetermined.org.

"The new site was launched to help empower patients to decide how their daily decisions—whether to take a certain medication or not, whether to stick to or alter their diet, or how to manage various disease related situations—may affect their disease course and well being," says Kimberly Frederick, Senior Vice President of Mission for the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America. "It helps patients evaluate the risks and benefits of the choices they make, and helps them re-examine their options in managing life with inflammatory bowel disease."

The "I'll Be Determined" site takes users through four separate decision journeys; treatment, diet, complications, and living with IBD and provides patients with a wide-range of educational content displayed in an interactive format through engaging questions and video-based tutorials.

The Treatment journey shows patients the importance of how various treatment options can differ and the benefits that come with having an informed dialogue with their physicians. Through the Diet journey, patients can reevaluate their dietary choices and gain a greater understanding of their nutritional needs. The Complications journey educates patients on short and long-term side effects of poorly managed IBD, including colorectal cancer. Patients who complete the journeys are shown that by managing their disease and taking control, they can have a better quality of life.

Throughout their journey, patients earn badges and after completing all four journeys, can participate in a virtual dedication wall where they can select their own "IBD Decree"—a promise to themselves for optimal disease management in the future. They can also sub-

mit additional posts as they cope with the day-to-day challenges that often come with IBD and can update others on the progress of their "IBD Decree."

About Crohn's Disease & Ulcerative Colitis

Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis are painful, medically incurable illnesses that attack the digestive system. Crohn's disease may attack anywhere from the mouth to the anus, while ulcerative colitis inflames only the large intestine (colon). Symptoms may include abdominal pain, persistent diarrhea, rectal bleeding, fever and weight loss. Many patients require hospitalization and surgery. These illnesses can cause severe complications, including colon cancer in patients with long-term disease. Some 1.4 million American adults and children suffer from Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis, with as many as 150,000 under the age of 18. Most people develop the diseases between the ages of 15 and 35.

About the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation

The Crohn's & Colitis Foundation of America's mission is to cure Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, and to improve the quality of life of children and adults affected by these diseases. The Foundation ranks third among leading health non-profits in the percentage of expense devoted to research toward a cure, with more than 81 cents of every dollar the Foundation spends goes to mission-critical programs. The Foundation consistently meets the standards of organizations that monitor charities, including the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance (give.org) and the American Institute of Philanthropy (charitywatch.org). For more information, contact the Foundation at 800-932-2423 or visit www.ccfa.org. Join CCFA on Facebook at <http://apps.facebook.com/supportccfa/> and follow CCFA on Twitter at www.twitter.com/ccfa.

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