

Microscopic Colitis

The under-diagnosed condition which is on the rise in the UK

What is microscopic colitis?

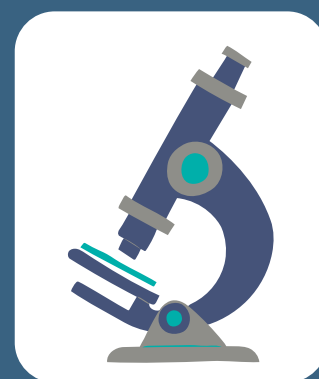
Microscopic colitis is an Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD). This group includes Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis too. Microscopic colitis is an inflammation of the large bowel.

One way IBD can be diagnosed is by an endoscopy (a small camera looking at your digestive system). In Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis, the inflammation may be seen on camera.

Microscopic colitis cannot be seen on camera.

A sample of tissue (biopsy) has to be taken of the bowel and looked at under a microscope.

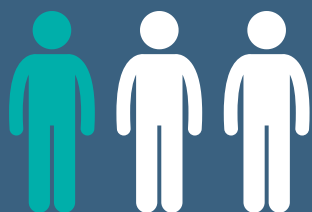
This step is not always completed, so people may be left undiagnosed.



Symptoms include:

- Persistent, frequent & watery diarrhoea
- Stomach pain
- Fatigue
- Waking in the night to empty the bowel
- Urgency to empty the bowel

Symptoms of microscopic colitis can mimic those of Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS).



In fact, one study showed that **1 in 3 patients with microscopic colitis were incorrectly diagnosed with IBS** initially.

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Microscopic colitis cases are on the rise globally

17,000

new cases of microscopic colitis are being diagnosed each year in the UK.

But the real number could be a lot higher, because microscopic colitis is often underreported and misdiagnosed.

Despite the missed diagnoses, the incidence (number of new cases) of microscopic colitis in **2016 was twice that observed in 2009.**



"I spent 12 years living with undiagnosed microscopic colitis. On my worst days, I was going to the toilet 30 to 40 times per day. I went to the doctor again and again but it took me all these years to get a correct diagnosis.

The treatment I have received after getting my diagnosis has changed my life. I feel like I've regained some semblance of normal.

Victoria - [read her story here.](#)

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Although microscopic colitis is under-diagnosed, once diagnosed, there is an effective treatment for most people.

Do not suffer with your symptoms alone or in silence. Seek help from your GP, or contact Guts UK for information.

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