

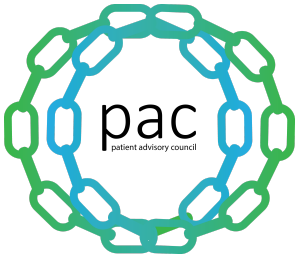
Patient Advisory Council

College and IBD Toolkit

Navigating the transition to college can be overwhelming, especially if you're dealing with a chronic illness like IBD. In this handbook, you'll find resources to make the process less stressful. Whether you're a high schooler, in college, or a family member, this handbook can help guide you through the process.

We'll give you information about finding the right school, preparing for college, and surviving classes, dorms, and dining with IBD!



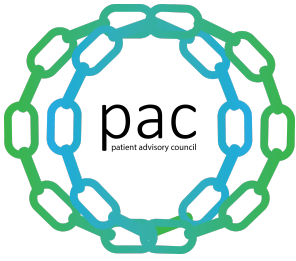


Disclaimer

This document was created by members of the ImproveCareNow Community. Do not rely on the information in this document to diagnose or treat any health condition. This information does not constitute medical advice and is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

Disclaimers posted at http://www.improvecarenow.org/icn_tools_disclaimer apply to this document.



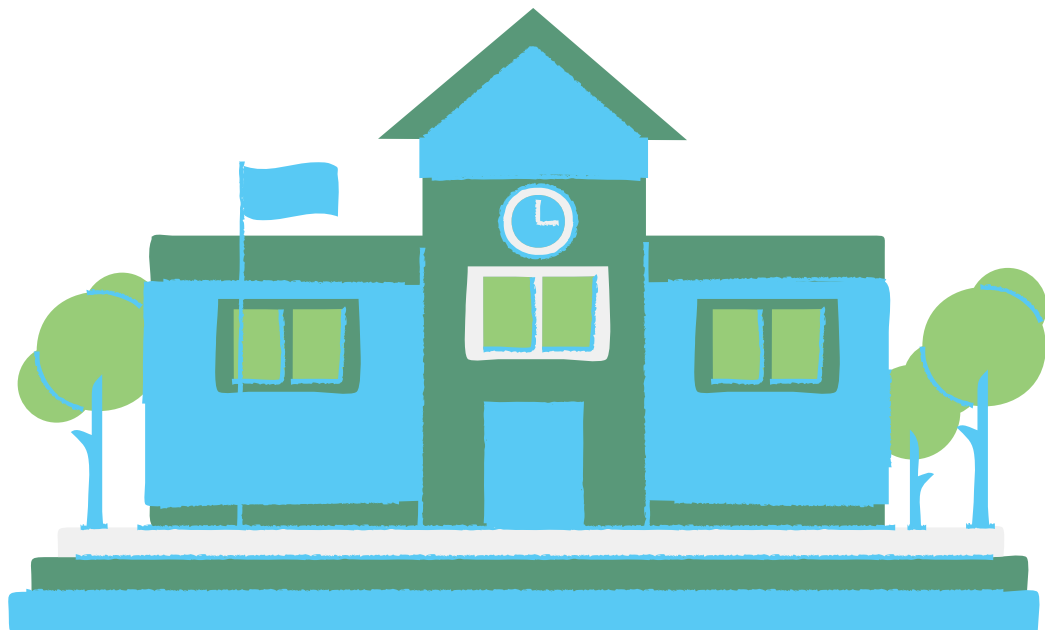


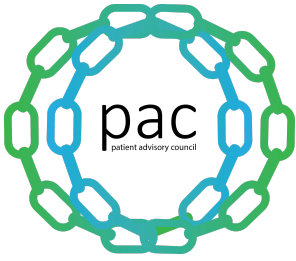
Finding a 'Good Fit' School

There are many factors to consider when you're searching for your 'good fit' school, especially if you're dealing with IBD. It's important to find a school where you feel comfortable, safe, and supported -in both your academics and your health. Below, you will find a list of some things to consider when looking at colleges and making your final decision.

Things to Consider

- Do you feel comfortable managing your own care away from home?
- Will you have easy access to medical care, and will you need supplemental health insurance?
- What services are offered at the student health center?
- Are there options for dorm/bathroom layouts that will suit your needs?
- Will the layout of campus pose a physical challenge for you?
- Does the school offer online classes, academic support, or tutoring services in case of flares?





Preparing for College

Once you've decided what school you'll be attending, it's a good idea to start preparing for your first year ASAP -especially if you'll be moving away from home! If you need any accommodations (for academics, housing, transportation, or dining), it's a good idea to contact these departments before you arrive on campus in the fall. Use our checklists and template letters to make communicating with your college easier!

Healthcare Checklist

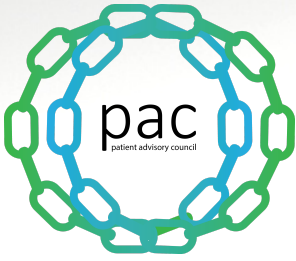
Regardless of whether you're staying local or moving:

- ☐ Contact your [school's health center](#) to find out what services they offer and if they can help coordinate care. Use our template letter [link](#)!
- ☐ Contact your GI doctor/primary care physician to [request a medical summary](#) of your care to date for your files.

If you're moving away from home, you'll also want to:

- ☐ Find a [GI doctor in the area](#) -ask your GI if they have any colleagues near your college.
- ☐ Locate a pharmacy, treatment center, and ER nearby.
- ☐ Contact your insurance to find out if you need a supplemental plan. Your school may offer supplemental insurance, which you may opt out of if you already have sufficient coverage. If you don't know where to start, you can use this script [link](#).





Preparing for College

Academic Accommodations

Before the school year starts:

- ☐ Contact your school's Disability Support Services to set up a meeting.
- ☐ Get documentation of illness from your GI team and discuss options for accommodations.

The first week of school (or earlier, if possible):

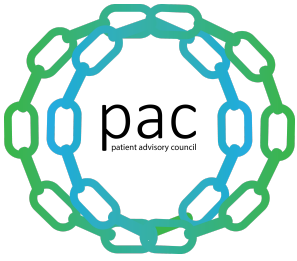
- ☐ Meet with Support Services to determine a list of 'reasonable accommodations.'
- ☐ Review the support office's letter to your professors informing them of your accommodations.
- ☐ Meet with professors to discuss accommodations ASAP -you can use this template to get started! [🔗](#)

Check out the PAC Accommodations Toolkit for more tips! [🔗](#)

Housing Checklist

As soon as you choose your college:

- ☐ Review dorm room options on your school's housing website.
- ☐ Decide if you'll need any housing accommodations, like a single room, private bathroom, or fridge access.
- ☐ Contact the school's housing department ASAP to set up accommodations -your GI doctor can use this template letter [🔗](#) from GIKids.
- ☐ If you run into any issues, the Student Support team may be able to help advocate for your needs.



Preparing for College



Dining Checklist

As soon as you choose your college:

- ☐ Research the dining options on/around campus.
- ☐ If you're on a restricted diet, consider your dining needs -to go meals, special meal options, allergies, food restrictions, etc.
- ☐ Contact the dining manager to discuss meal plans and dining accommodations using our template letter [link](#) !
- ☐ If you run into any issues, your school's Student Support team or health center staff may be able to help advocate for your needs.



Tips for Surviving College with IBD

The beginning of college can be an exciting and challenging time. You may be dealing with new experiences, new friends, a new city, and harder classes -all of which may take some getting used to. Here are some tips for managing school, dorms, and the dining hall with IBD:

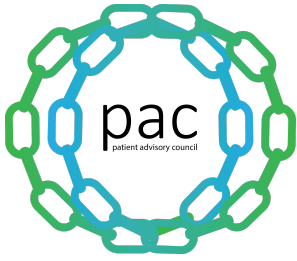


Tips for Balancing College and IBD

- If you feel worse during certain times of day, try to plan your class schedule accordingly. Check with the school's disability services to see if you qualify for priority class registration.
- Consider how many classes you are taking, how rigorous each class is, and what the workload will be. *It's better to focus on doing well in a few classes, and have energy left for life outside academics.*
- Don't overcommit yourself right away. As tempting as it is to sign up for every extracurricular, take it slow and decide what you have time/energy for. Remember to leave time to rest and recuperate!
- *If you find yourself struggling, don't be afraid to **ask for help!*** Most schools provide free/low-cost counseling services to students.

Tips for School and Classes

- **Meet with your professors** ASAP to explain a bit about your IBD--how it might impact you in class, what help you may need during a flare, etc. Let them know if you're not feeling well or won't be in class. If you've discussed this in advance, professors are often more understanding.
- If you're struggling with schoolwork or are unable to make it to class, take advantage of the resources your school offers: tutoring, study groups, office hours, or online courses can make a difference!
- **Accommodations** can be helpful whether or not you're flaring--disability support services can help arrange a note taker, request lecture recordings, excuse absences, provide assignment extensions, and more. Remember--accommodations exist to help you succeed!



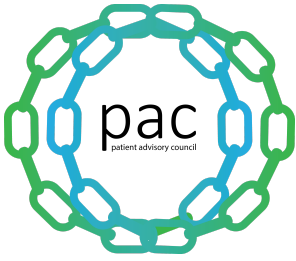
Tips for Surviving College with IBD

Study Tips

- Divide big assignments into smaller chunks so they're less overwhelming. If you're not feeling well, try to get through one small section at a time. Take a break, then if you're able, do another section.
- Try to start assignments ASAP so you can spread out the workload-whenver possible, don't leave things until the last minute!
- Learn to prioritize, and conserve your energy for important things. Decide what has to get done in detail and what can be skimmed. If you're struggling to finish all your work, talk with your professors about modifying coursework.
- For more study tips, take a look at this link [🔗](#) and this link [🔗](#).

Dorm and Shared Bathroom Tips

- If you feel comfortable, **talk with your RA and/or roommates about IBD.** You don't need to tell them everything, but it's good to give them a sense of what to expect -if they see you give yourself an injection or change your ostomy, it's good to provide a little context!
- If you have a private bathroom, great! If not, **scope out the bathroom situation around your dorms/campus**, and find the least crowded/cleanest. If the academic buildings or dining hall stay unlocked after hours, they're often empty and more private. **Find the bathrooms around your classes so you know where to go!**
- Living in the dorms can be a pain if you're immunosuppressed. Make sure to get an annual flu shot, wash your hands, and wear shower sandals if you're sharing a shower/bathroom!

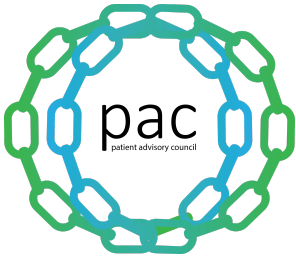


Tips for Surviving College with IBD

Dining Tips

- Many schools post their **menus online** or near dining facilities, so you can scope out if there are safe options for you.
- **Keep some easy, safe food options on hand** for when you're flaring or not feeling well enough to go to the dining hall. Some schools may be able to supply a small fridge/microwave if you need to prepare food that won't upset your digestion.
- If you're struggling to find options, or are unable to eat in the dining hall due to a flare, student support services or the health center may be able to coordinate accommodations allowing you to take food to go, have special meals made for you, or exempt you from required meal plans.





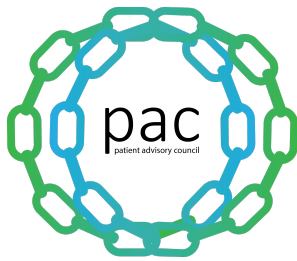
Things to Remember

All nighters, cramming for finals, downing energy drinks -the 'work until you drop' attitude in college can make it difficult to take care of yourself.

You should never feel like you need to sacrifice your health or well-being to pass a class. Just because your peers are up until 4 AM working on papers doesn't mean you're a less dedicated student if you need to prioritize rest.

It's ok if not every day is 'productive.' There will be days that you don't feel well, or can't focus on your schoolwork as much as you'd like to. We have more 'off' days (or months) than most, which can be frustrating. It's nothing to be ashamed of. Your worth as a student isn't determined by how much you get done. If your body needs to rest, let it.





Links

Description	Permalink (URL)
PAC Webpage	http://improvecarenow.org/patients
Tools Disclaimer	http://improvecarenow.org/icn_tools_disclaimer
Health Center Template Letter	https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vibbs4bRYa86hHMjBBImC4ZGNwh894X18sMG9vme_tc/edit?usp=sharing
Insurance Script	https://docs.google.com/document/d/1K2zs4AnY9MYyW29daGoqHGnRh80RS9OTCIW7k0OLgds/edit?usp=sharing
Talking with Professors	https://docs.google.com/document/d/14Elnj06ik74qeuU7HxPZFRXqCir9PuRh0RjT8FsGXog/edit?usp=sharing
Accommodations Toolkit	http://www.improvecarenow.org/accommodations
Housing Letter	https://www.gikids.org/files/documents/resources/ibd/SAMPLE_SINGLE_OCCUPANCY_DORM_ROOM_REQUEST_LETTER.pdf
Dining Letter	https://docs.google.com/document/d/1xtJGq_rJL8QnYs-9IsNjJJRrcB6x6B_Kq3d54ZiCRms/edit?usp=sharing
Study Tips #1	https://thehealthsessions.com/study-guide-for-chronically-ill-23-proven-strategies/
Study Tips #2	http://chroniccurve.org/post/31746427300/college-and-chronic-illness-19-tips-to-study

Contact Information

Toolkit Creator

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Patient Advisory Council
Contact us [here!](#)

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