

Crohn's Disease and ulcerative colitis are chronic autoimmune diseases that attack the digestive system, collectively known as Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD). Both can cause debilitating pain and severe diarrhoea. People with IBD often need to be hospitalised and several will undergo multiple surgeries during their lifetime. There is no cure. Twenty percent of those affected are children and virtually all those affected are on chronic medications to control their symptoms and prevent their disease from progressing.

Patients are often afraid to leave home and attend simple things like a day at the beach or a shopping trip for fear of having an accident in public. Not only are the symptoms difficult to talk about, but can lead to social isolation.

New Zealand has one of the highest incidence rates of IBD in the world. Over 20,000 New Zealander have these diseases. Despite this, IBD remains a closet disease, shrouded in silence and relatively unknown.

CCNZ has a card that patients can present at toilets to 'jump the queues' or help gain access to a workplace or business toilet when there are no public toilets nearby. Recognition of the card will help prevent embarrassing accidents because there often is not time for people to explain.



What can you do to help when you are approached by someone with this card?

If someone approaches you with this card, please understand that he/she has a serious medical condition and that some disabilities are invisible. For them to even approach a stranger with this card takes courage and means they have no other option. Please direct them to the nearest toilet quickly and quietly. Your understanding and help will be appreciated more than words can say.