

Let's Talk...

LET'S
TALK
GUTS

Supporting your loved one

If you're the family member or friend of someone living with a digestive condition, knowing how best to support them can be difficult. Whether it's practical ways to help or knowing the right thing to say, we know that you want to be there for them when things get tough and show up for them in the right ways.

Five things to say to show someone you care:

1. "I'm here to listen whenever you want to talk but there's no pressure to share if you don't feel up to it."

Why it works: It opens the door for a conversation without making them feel forced to explain.

2. "How are you feeling today?"

Why it works: Digestive conditions and symptoms can fluctuate widely from day to day. Asking about today acknowledges that reality.

3. "Please don't worry about cancelling plans last minute. Your health always comes first."

Why it works: Experiencing a flare-up in symptoms before an event can cause huge guilt. This reassurance helps to relieve that anxiety.

4. "You don't have to put on a brave face around me."

Why it works: Living with a digestive condition is exhausting. Knowing they can drop the mask and just be as they are can be a huge relief.

5. "I might not fully understand what you're going through, but I'm in your corner no matter what. You don't have to do this alone."

Why it works: Honesty builds trust. You don't need to be a medical expert to be a great source of support.



Five practical ways to help someone living with a digestive condition:

1. Let them take the lead on choosing where to eat

Check ahead for menus with good dietary options, or suggest a low stress catch up at home where they can control the ingredients. Alternatively, if they can't eat food, suggest another activity, like a catch up at home over a cuppa or whilst doing a low impact activity such as crafting or watching a feel-good TV show.

2. Be mindful of toilet and bathroom facilities

When planning an outing or a walk, do some research around accessible public toilets. Reassurance and preparation can help someone feel more secure and more in control.

3. Offer help with everyday errands during a flare-up of symptoms

Cooking, grocery shopping, or walking the dog can feel monumental when someone is exhausted or in pain. Even offering to carry out a practical task can help someone's headspace if they can't leave the house.

4. Educate yourself on their digestive condition

Take time to read up on their specific diagnosis, such as on our website at gutscharity.org.uk/information. It means the world when they don't have to constantly explain their condition.

5. Keep inviting them, even if they say no

Digestive conditions can be incredibly isolating. Even if they can't make it, being included reminds them that they are still valued and wanted. Rearranging plans to go round and visit them instead of heading out sometimes also shows compassion and care.

When it comes to conversations, a simple 'How are you doing?' can be all it takes to give someone the space to feel seen and heard. Talking can help people to feel less isolated and alone.

If you know someone living with a digestive condition, why not have a natter over the phone, drop them a 'Just checking in' text, or invite them to meet for walk or a cuppa?



Supporting someone living with a digestive condition?

For information and guidance, go to gutscharity.org.uk/information or contact our Helpline on **0300 102 4887** or go to gutscharity.org.uk/helpline. We're here if you need us.

