



Gastritis

What is Gastritis?

Gastritis refers to any condition that causes inflammation of your stomach lining. Normally, the stomach lining is coated by a thick layer of heavy mucus that protects it from stomach acids. When the stomach lining becomes injured or weak it produces less mucus, which allows the stomach acid to damage and irritate the stomach lining.

Gastritis can either be an acute or chronic problem. Acute gastritis starts suddenly and lasts for only a short time, while chronic gastritis, if untreated, can last for years. Both types can cause either a general inflammation of the stomach lining or small erosions in the lining called ulcers.

Gastritis can be caused by a number of different things including medications, medical conditions, physical stress, social habits, swallowing a chemical, and infection. Common causes of gastritis are H. Pylori bacteria, regular use of pain relievers (ibuprofen, naproxen, aspirin), excessive alcohol use, cocaine use, stress, and radiation treatment. Age also plays a role, with older people more likely to be affected by gastritis than younger people.

What are the Symptoms of Gastritis?

If you have gastritis, you may have no symptoms at all. Or you may experience more serious problems, including stomach or duodenal (upper intestine) ulcers.

The most common symptoms of gastritis include:

- Nausea or vomiting
- Pain in the upper abdomen
- Loss of appetite
- Belching
- Bloating
- Feeling full after eating only a small amount of food

How is Gastritis Diagnosed?

Your doctor is likely to suspect gastritis based on your description of your symptoms and a physical exam. Depending on your symptoms, you may have a test to check for H. pylori. This can be done by testing either your blood, stool, or breath.



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You may also be scheduled for an endoscopy. This involves inserting a long, narrow tube with a light and tiny camera attached to it, through your mouth and esophagus into your stomach and upper part of your small intestine. This allows your doctor to inspect the lining of your stomach and look for signs of inflammation. If any area looks abnormal, your doctor may take a biopsy. The tissue taken during the biopsy is then sent to the laboratory and tested for *H. pylori*.

How is Gastritis Treated?

If your gastritis is caused by *H. pylori*, you will be treated with several different medications. You are likely to be given two antibiotics to take for 14 days and a proton pump inhibitor (PPI), which reduces the amount of acid your stomach produces. Up to 20% of patients with *H. pylori* will not be cured by their first course of treatment. Because of this, you will be retested for *H. pylori* after completing your treatment. If you still have it, you will receive a second cycle of medication. It is important to complete all medications as prescribed and to follow up with your doctor.

If you have gastritis that is not caused by *H. pylori*, you will still be prescribed medication to reduce the amount of acid your stomach produces. If your gastritis is thought to be caused by medication or excessive alcohol use, then stopping their use may relieve your symptoms. Reducing stress may also improve your symptoms.

What is the Prognosis of Gastritis?

Most people recover from gastritis and have no more problems. Depending on what caused your gastritis, your symptoms may flare up from time to time, but these should respond well to treatment.

Where Can You Get More Information About Gastritis?

- **National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases**
<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/gastritis>
- **UK National Health Service**
<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/gastritis/Pages/Introduction.aspx>