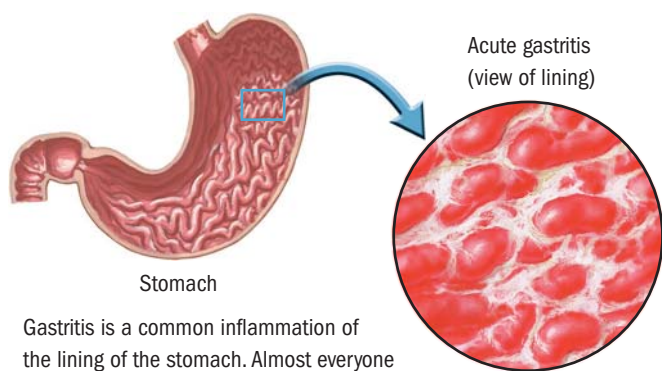
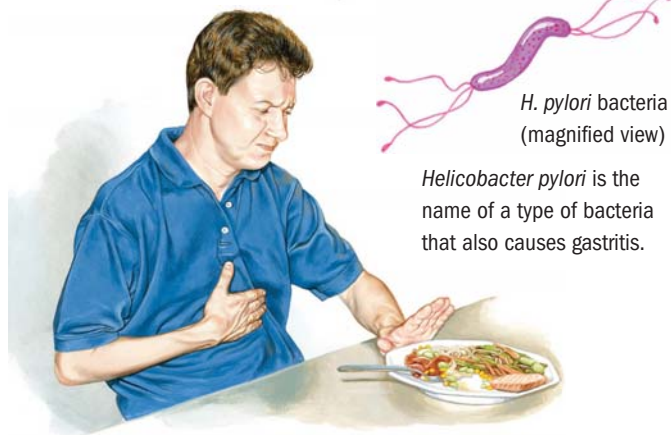
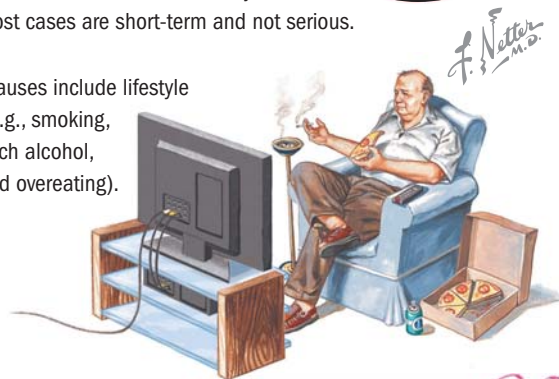


MANAGING YOUR GASTRITIS

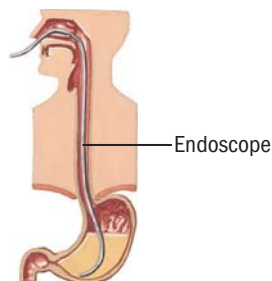


Gastritis is a common inflammation of the lining of the stomach. Almost everyone gets it. Most cases are short-term and not serious.

The many causes include lifestyle excesses (e.g., smoking, and too much alcohol, caffeine, and overeating).



The main symptoms are discomfort in the upper abdomen and cramps. Eating often makes the discomfort worse.



Your doctor will diagnose gastritis by using your medical history and physical examination. Sometimes your doctor may use upper endoscopy to rule out more serious conditions.



What Is Gastritis?

Gastritis is an inflammation (swelling, redness) of the lining of the stomach. This common condition affects almost everyone at some point in life. Most cases are short-term and have no lasting effects.

What Causes Gastritis?

The many causes include lifestyle excesses (e.g., smoking, alcohol, caffeine, and overeating). Gastritis is also a side effect of many medicines, such as aspirin and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). Other causes are bacterial and viral infections, stress from surgery, kidney failure, severe burns, and trauma. These things may increase acid production in the stomach or weaken the lining of the stomach. The bacterium named *Helicobacter pylori* is one of the more common causes of gastritis.

One type of gastritis that doesn't involve increased acid is atrophic gastritis. In this type, the stomach lining becomes damaged and shrunken.

What Are the Symptoms of Gastritis?

The main symptoms are discomfort in the upper abdomen (belly) and cramps. Eating often makes the pain worse. Many people have less appetite. Pain may radiate to the chest, so people think that it's related to the heart. Other symptoms may be bad breath, a burning acid taste in the mouth, and sometimes nausea, vomiting, and bleeding.

How Is Gastritis Diagnosed?

The doctor will diagnose gastritis by using the medical history. A physical examination is usually normal or may show slight pain in the stomach area.

The doctor may schedule upper endoscopy (looking at the stomach through a lighted, flexible tube) to rule out more serious conditions such as stomach ulcers or cancer. During endoscopy, the doctor can take a sample of stomach tissue (biopsy). This tissue can be checked for bacteria (*H. pylori*).

If endoscopy isn't done and symptoms continue, other tests may be done. These tests will also look for *H. pylori* by checking blood, stools (bowel movements), or breath.

Treatment focuses on symptoms and the cause. For *H. pylori* infection, a combination of antibiotics and acid-reducing medicines will cure it.



Eat regularly and not in excess.



Stop smoking.



Avoid alcohol and foods that are hard to digest or cause symptoms.



Severe abdominal pain

Call your doctor if abdominal pain is severe; you get severe chest pain that moves to the neck, jaw, or arm and occurs with sweating or shortness of breath; you have dark tarry stools; or you vomit blood.



Radiating chest pain with shortness of breath



Tarry stools

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NOTES

How Is Gastritis Treated?

Treatment focuses on symptoms and avoiding the cause. For *H. pylori* infection, a combination of antibiotics and acid-reducing medicines will cure it. Medications such as ibuprofen, naproxen, or aspirin and alcoholic beverages should be avoided.

Mild symptoms are controlled with antacids, over-the-counter histamine-2 (H₂) blockers, or proton pump inhibitors (PPIs). H₂ blockers include famotidine and ranitidine. PPIs include omeprazole and pantoprazole. H₂ blockers and PPIs block stomach acid production. Antacids neutralize stomach acid. Some of these medicines are also available in prescription strength.

For severe gastritis with bleeding, a hospital stay may be needed. Intravenous fluids and medicines are given to control symptoms, reduce stomach acid, and protect the stomach lining.

DOs and DON'Ts in Managing Gastritis:

- ✓ **DO** eat regularly and not in excess.
- ✓ **DO** use antacids and over-the-counter H₂ blockers or PPIs for mild symptoms.
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if abdominal pain becomes severe or you vomit blood.
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if symptoms don't get better after 3 to 5 days of treatment.
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if you get severe chest pain that radiates to your neck, jaw, or arm and is associated with sweating or shortness of breath.
- ✓ **DO** call your doctor if you have blood with bowel movements or dark tarry stools.
- ⊗ **DON'T** smoke.
- ⊗ **DON'T** drink alcohol.
- ⊗ **DON'T** eat foods that are hard to digest.
- ⊗ **DON'T** use medicines that can irritate your stomach, such as aspirin and NSAIDs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact the following sources:

- National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse
Tel: (800) 891-5389
Website: <http://www.niddk.nih.gov/health/digest/nddic.htm>
- American Gastroenterological Association
Tel: (301) 654-2055
Website: <http://www.gastro.org>
- American College of Gastroenterology
Tel: (703) 820-7400
Website: <http://www.acg.gi.org>