



Gastritis

The human body is a complex system of interconnected organs and structures, each with a specific role in maintaining our overall health. One such organ is the stomach, a muscular sac that plays a critical role in digestion. But what happens when the lining of this important organ becomes inflamed? This condition is known as gastritis.

What is gastritis?

In medicine, the term “gastric” refers to the stomach organ and, the suffix “-itis” refers to inflammation. So, gastritis is an inflammation, irritation, or stomach lining erosion. It can occur suddenly, which is known as acute gastritis, or it can occur gradually over time, which is known as chronic gastritis. Both types can cause discomfort and potential complications if not treated.



What are the Symptoms of Gastritis?

The symptoms of gastritis can vary from person to person, but some common signs include stomach upset or pain, belching, abdominal bloating, nausea, and vomiting. In some cases, gastritis can lead to more severe complications, such as stomach ulcers and an increased risk of stomach cancer.

Acute vs. Chronic Gastritis

Acute gastritis comes on suddenly, resulting in severe, immediate symptoms, such as sudden and severe stomach pain, nausea, and vomiting. On the other hand, chronic gastritis develops slowly over time. Chronic gastritis symptoms can be more subtle and long-lasting, often including a dull stomach ache, nausea, and a feeling of fullness or bloating after eating.

Causes of Gastritis

A variety of factors can cause gastritis. These can include long-term use of certain medications, such as nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) like Aleve, Motrin and Ibuprofen, excessive alcohol consumption, chronic vomiting, and stress. It can also be caused by infections, such as the bacterium *Helicobacter pylori*, which lives in the stomach's mucous lining. The combination of a daily aspirin – even low-dose 81 mg aspirin - and frequent use of NSAIDs is probably the most common cause.

Diagnosis and Treatment

If you're experiencing gastritis symptoms, seeking medical attention is essential. Your healthcare provider may use a variety of tests to diagnose this condition, including a breath or stool test to exclude an H. pylori infection, an “upper scope” endoscopy of your upper digestive system. Once diagnosed, treatment for gastritis primarily involves addressing the underlying cause and relieving the symptoms. This can include lifestyle changes, such as dietary modifications and stress management, medication to reduce stomach acid, and, in some cases, antibiotics to treat a Helicobacter pylori infection.

Remember, it's essential to consult with a healthcare provider if you're experiencing any gastritis symptoms. They can diagnose adequately and guide you through the appropriate treatment options.

Center For Digestive Health & Nutrition

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The Center for Digestive Health & Nutrition is a private medical practice comprised of experienced Gastroenterologists, Nurse Practitioners, and staff members dedicated to preventing and treating digestive disorders. Our physicians have been serving the needs of those in Western Pennsylvania and surrounding areas since 1977, having cared for tens of thousands of individuals with digestive problems. Our mission is to deliver high-quality gastroenterology services efficiently and cost-consciously. We realize the very sensitive nature of GI illness and understand the necessity to provide our services in an environment that stresses patient privacy and confidentiality and where patient satisfaction is the goal. Appointments can be conveniently scheduled online via our website above. Learn more about digestive issues on Instagram @thedigestivetract

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