

## Gastritis: A Brief Overview

### What is gastritis?

Gastritis, as any medical book would describe it, is the inflammation of the stomach lining. The term itself was derived from the Greek terms gastro- which literally means stomach, and -itis meaning inflammation. This condition may manifest itself alone or as a symptom of an underlying medical condition. This may appear out of nowhere or develop slowly over time.

### What causes gastritis?

Gastritis usually develops when the stomach's protective lining becomes overwhelmed or damaged. Without this mucus lining to shield the stomach walls, digestive acids may then irritate and inflame your stomach lining. A lot of factors may trigger gastritis, these include:

- o Bacterial infection. The bacteria type helicobacter pylori may cause gastritis. Though it is said that everybody is infected with this type of bacteria, the majority of those infected don't manifest complications.
- o Medications. Aspirin, Ibuprofen naproxen, and other non-steroidal inflammatory drugs may reduce a key substance that helps preserve the protective barrier of the stomach.
- o Alcohol. Alcohol can irritate and erode the stomach lining, making the stomach more vulnerable to gastric juices.
- o Bile reflux disorder. Bile, one released from the gallbladder, is supposed to go to the small intestines through a series of small tubes. The pyloric valve prevents bile from flowing into the stomach from the intestines. If the pyloric valve malfunctions, bile may flow into the stomach, causing stomach lining irritation.
- o Autoimmune deficiency. The body itself attacks the cells that make up the stomach lining.
- o Other diseases. Gastritis may be a connected to other medical conditions, including: HIV/AIDS, Crohn's disease, parasitic infections, certain connective tissue disorders, and liver or kidney failures.

### What are the signs and symptoms of gastritis?

The following symptoms listed may be a result of gastritis or any underlying medical condition that caused gastritis:

- o A gnawing or burning ache or pain (indigestion) in your upper abdomen that may become either worse or better when you eat.
- o Nausea and vomiting.
- o Fever.
- o Loss of appetite.
- o Belching or bloating.
- o A feeling of fullness in your upper abdomen after eating.
- o Weight loss.
- o Gastric bleeding.
- o Lethargy.

Acute gastritis, or gastritis that occurs suddenly, usually results in a combination of nausea and a burning pain or discomfort in the upper abdominal area. On the other hand, chronic gastritis, which develops over time, is more probable to cause a dull pain and a feeling of fullness or loss of appetite after having a few bites of food.

### How is gastritis treated?

Treatment depends on the severity and the cause of the gastritis. Gastritis caused by medications or alcohol consumption may be prevented simply by limiting, if not stopping the use of those substances. Certain medications are also prescribed to treat helicobacter pylori bacterial infection, counter stomach acids, reduce the manifestation of certain symptoms, and promote healing of the stomach lining. These medications include antacids, acid blockers, and drugs designed to blocking the actions of acid-secreting cells.

### What complications may arise from gastritis?

If left untreated, gastritis may lead to more severe medical complications such as stomach ulcers and stomach hemorrhage. Certain forms of chronic gastritis may even increase the risk of developing stomach cancer, especially if the stomach lining has become too thin or there has been a change in the lining cells.

We can't always help getting sick or infected by these kinds of medical conditions. However taking preventive measures may help lessen the burden of having gastritis. A well-balanced diet, or an evenly spaced, proportioned meal may help ease the effects of stomach acid. Limiting alcohol intake or switching pain reliever brands may reduce stomach lining irritation. Lastly, following your doctor's advice may help you get rid of gastritis faster.

### About the Author

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