

Ulcer Facts

- ◆ Spicy foods and stress DO NOT cause ulcers.
- ◆ One in ten Americans develops an ulcer at some point during his/her life.
- ◆ *H.pylori* causes more than 90% of all duodenal ulcers and up to 80% of gastric ulcers.
- ◆ Not all people who have *H.pylori* develop ulcers.

For More Information Please Contact:

National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse

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Bethesda, MD 20892-3570
Phone: 1-800-891-5389
Email: nddic@info.niddk.nih.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention National Center for Infectious Diseases

1600 Clifton Road, MS-A49
Atlanta, GA 30333
Phone: 4-888-MY-ULCER (1-888-698-5237)
Web Site: www.cdc.gov

American Academy of Family Physicians

11400 Tomahawk Creek Parkway
Leawood, KS 66211-2672
Web Site: <http://familydoctor.org>

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Complete Wellness:

A Guide to Managing Your Health

Helicobacter Pylori

GI Series, R4

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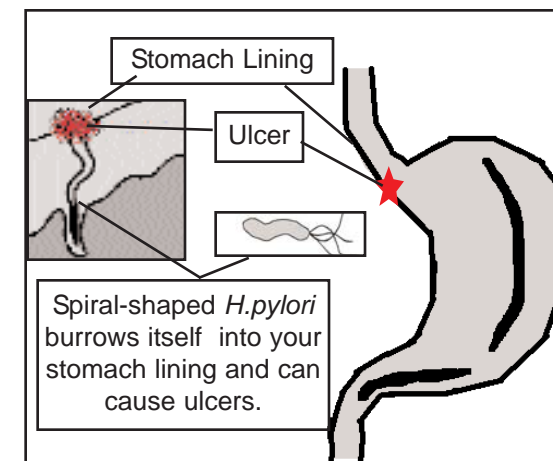
The University of Louisiana at Monroe School of Pharmacy

*Do you have a peptic ulcer
or ulcer symptoms?*

If the answer is “yes,” please read this brochure. You could have a bacterial infection called *helicobacter pylori* or *H.pylori*.

What is H. pylori?

H.pylori is a spiral-shaped bacterium that burrows itself into the sensitive lining of the stomach. It releases an ammonia-like substance that causes irritation and inflammation, ulcers, and possibly even stomach cancer. Research shows that more than 90% of all gastritis and peptic ulcers are caused by *H.pylori*.



What is a peptic ulcer?

A **peptic ulcer** is a sore in the lining of the stomach. It may also be called a duodenal or gastric ulcer.

How do I know if I have a peptic ulcer?



MOST COMMON SYMPTOMS INCLUDE:

- Burning pain or dull gnawing ache in your stomach or abdomen that usually comes and goes for a few days or weeks.
- Pain usually occurs 2-3 hours after a meal, or in the middle of the night when your stomach is empty.
- Pain can usually be temporarily relieved by eat-

MORE SERIOUS SYMPTOMS:

- Feel sick to your stomach or vomiting.
- Don't feel like eating, or have pain when you eat.

EMERGENCY SYMPTOMS:

- Vomit that looks like coffee grounds or is bloody.
- Black or bloody stool, or stool that looks like tar.
- Sudden or sharp pain in your stomach.

If you have any of these emergency symptoms you should contact your doctor immediately.

What do I do if I have been diagnosed with a peptic ulcer or, if I have ulcer symptoms?

If you are already being treated for an ulcer, ask your doctor about being tested for *H.pylori*. If you have ulcer symptoms and you are not being treated, you should contact your doctor.

How will my doctor know if I have the *H. pylori* bacterium?

If you have not previously been diagnosed with an ulcer, your doctor may perform an endoscopy. This is where a thin lighted tube with a flexible video camera is inserted down your throat and into your stomach. This allows your doctor to look at and take pictures of the inside of your stomach to see if you have an ulcer.

Once your doctor knows that you have an ulcer, the next step is to find out what is causing the ulcer. It is important to know what is causing your ulcer because the treatments are different.

There are four tests that your doctor may use to check for *H.pylori*. These tests are:

1. Blood Test
2. Breath Test
3. Stool Sample
4. Tissue Test

Educational material provided to Louisiana Medicaid recipients and providers by the Louisiana Medicaid Pharmacy Benefits Management Program (PBM) in the Department of Health and Hospitals and developed by the University of Louisiana at Monroe School of Pharmacy.

Is there any way to treat *H. pylori*?

H.pylori was not discovered until the 1980s. Before its discovery, doctors were treating all peptic ulcers with the same medications; however, when *H.pylori* was present, these drugs would relieve the pain for a while, but the ulcers would almost always come back.

Now that doctors know most peptic ulcers are caused by *H.pylori*, they are able to treat your ulcer **and** prevent it from returning.

If you have an ulcer caused by *H.pylori* your doctor may prescribe an anti-ulcer drug, but it will probably be taken with other drugs as part of a triple therapy.

Your doctor may prescribe:

- * A medication to stop your stomach from producing acids,
- * An antibiotic to kill the *H.pylori* bacteria, and
- * An antacid to protect your stomach from the acids and reduce the pain.

NOTE: Take all of your medication. If you stop taking your medication too soon the *H.pylori* may still be there and your ulcer will come back.

You will probably have to take several pills each day for several weeks to get rid of the *H.pylori*. You may also experience some mild side effects from the medications, such as nausea, dizziness, diarrhea, or headaches. It has been proven that taking these medications together is the best way to kill the *H.pylori* and permanently cure your ulcer.

How can I protect myself from *H. pylori*?

Nobody knows for sure how *H.pylori* spreads, so nobody knows how to prevent getting it. *H.pylori* may be spread through contaminated food or water, or even through saliva or fecal matter, but this is not known for sure.

If I have *H. pylori*, is there anything I can do to prevent ulcers or keep them from getting worse?

If your doctor tells you that you have *H.pylori* or peptic ulcers, here's what you can do to keep them from getting worse:

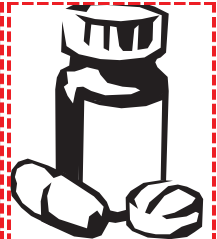
Don't Smoke



Avoid Alcohol



Talk to your doctor about any medications that you take, including aspirin and other over-the-counter drugs.



Ask your doctor, pharmacist, or nurse about the information contained in this brochure.