

Patient Advisory

Dyspepsia

About dyspepsia

Dyspepsia often called indigestion is a chronic or recurrent pain or an uncomfortable feeling in the upper middle part of the abdomen. It refers to a group of upper gastrointestinal symptoms such as belching, bloating, nausea or heartburn that may be intermittent or persistent.

Common Causes

Some of the common causes of dyspepsia are:

- Intolerance to certain food or drugs such as fatty food, excessive drinking of alcohol or coffee and drugs like aspirin, NSAIDs, certain antibiotics, diabetic, antihypertensive drugs etc
- Presence of GERD, peptic ulcer disease, gastroparesis, malabsorption syndromes or parasitic infections
- Helicobacter pylori infection
- Any pancreatic or biliary disease

Diagnosis of the causes of Dyspepsia

A detailed medical history and eliminating possible causes are usually sufficient to diagnose the condition. Symptoms of dyspepsia in those below 50 years and no alarm features need no investigations whereas those over 50 years with a recent onset of the symptoms and or presence of alarm features need to be investigated immediately.

When to contact a Doctor

Call your doctor immediately if the following warning signs appear:

- Recent unexplained weight loss
- Difficulty swallowing
- Severe vomiting
- Passing of black tarry stool
- Feeling of a mass in the abdomen

Treatment

Treatment for dyspepsia usually includes some medications, lifestyle and behavioral changes. Some home remedy in the form of ajwain, jeera, ginger, gulvel, hing, pudina and tulsi may be used for relief from flatulence and indigestion.

Your doctor would warn you against the side effects of some of the medications for dyspepsia. Side effects of some are listed below:

- Aluminium hydroxide: Constipation
- Ranitidine: Headache, dizziness
- Omeprazole: Diarrhea, nausea, fatigue, constipation, vomiting, flatulence, acid regurgitation
- Metronidazole: GI disturbances e.g. nausea, unpleasant metallic taste, vomiting, diarrhea or constipation
- Sucralfate: Constipation, diarrhea, nausea, dizziness, dry mouth
- H. Pylori drugs: Nausea, vomiting, loose stools, fatigue, abdominal cramps, headache and dizziness.

Care and Prevention

You may follow some simple measures to prevent and reduce the recurrence of dyspepsia:

- Avoid food that triggers the onset of symptoms
- Small and regular meals a day
- Avoid skipping of meals
- For those who smoke avoid or stop smoking
- Avoid excessive drinking of alcohol
- Stay away from stress by relaxing more often and practicing meditation
- Do not sleep right away after food as it leads to acid /food reflux
- Avoid taking anti-inflammatory drugs such as Ibuprofen, aspirin, acetaminophen, naproxen etc unless otherwise advised by your doctor

The table below summarizes foods to be avoided.

Dietary recommendations
Foods to be avoided (gas forming foods)
Alcohol Spicy and fried food or snacks Vegetables like cabbage, cauliflower, radish, potatoes, beans Some legumes such as chick peas, kidney beans etc Coconut Corn Onions Caffeine

Caution Notice

This information is not a substitute for a Doctor's advice. Only your Doctor can weigh all the diverse aspects of your condition and choose the treatment most likely to meet your needs.