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Peptic Ulcer

Also called: Duodenal ulcer, Gastric ulcer, Stomach ulcer, Ulcer

A peptic ulcer is a sore in the lining of your stomach or your duodenum, the first part of your small intestine. A burning stomach pain is the most common symptom. The pain:

- Starts between meals or during the night
- Briefly stops if you eat or take antacids
- Lasts for minutes to hours
- Comes and goes for several days or weeks

Peptic ulcers happen when the acids that help you digest food damage the walls of the stomach or duodenum. The most common cause is infection with a bacterium called *Helicobacter pylori*

[<https://medlineplus.gov/helicobacterpyloriinfections.html>] . Another cause is the long-term use of nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory medicines (NSAIDs) such as aspirin and ibuprofen. Stress and spicy foods do not cause ulcers, but can make them worse.

To see if you have an *H. pylori* infection, your doctor will test your blood, breath, or stool. Your doctor also may look inside your stomach and duodenum by doing an endoscopy [<https://medlineplus.gov/endoscopy.html>] or x-ray.

Peptic ulcers will get worse if not treated. Treatment may include medicines to reduce stomach acids or antibiotics to kill *H. pylori*. Antacids and milk can't heal peptic ulcers. Not smoking and avoiding alcohol can help. You may need surgery if your ulcers don't heal.

NIH: National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases

Start Here

- Definition & Facts for Peptic Ulcers (Stomach or Duodenal Ulcers) [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/peptic-ulcers-stomach-ulcers/definition-facts>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-digestivas/ulceras-pepticas/definicion-hechos>]
- Peptic Ulcer Disease [<https://familydoctor.org/condition/peptic-ulcer-disease/?adfree=true>]
(American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/condicion/ulcera-peptica-es/?adfree=true>]
- Peptic Ulcer Disease [<https://gi.org/topics/peptic-ulcer-disease/>] (American College of Gastroenterology)
- Ulcers [<https://familydoctor.org/condition/ulcers/?adfree=true>] (American Academy of Family Physicians)
Also in Spanish [<https://es.familydoctor.org/condicion/ulceras-es/?adfree=true>]

Symptoms

- Gastrointestinal Bleeding: MedlinePlus Health Topic [<https://medlineplus.gov/gastrointestinalbleeding.html>]
 (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/gastrointestinalbleeding.html>]

- Symptoms and Causes of Peptic Ulcer Disease [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/peptic-ulcers-stomach-ulcers/symptoms-causes>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-digestivas/ulceras-pepticas/sintomas-causas>]

Diagnosis and Tests

- Barium Swallow [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/barium-swallow/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/transito-esofagogastroduodenal/>]
- Diagnosis of Peptic Ulcers (Stomach or Duodenal Ulcers) [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/peptic-ulcers-stomach-ulcers/diagnosis>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-digestivas/ulceras-pepticas/diagnostico>]
- Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT) [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/fecal-occult-blood-test-fobt/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/prueba-de-sangre-oculta-en-heces/>]
- Helicobacter Pylori (H. Pylori) Tests [<https://medlineplus.gov/lab-tests/helicobacter-pylori-h-pylori-tests/>]  (National Library of Medicine)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/pruebas-de-laboratorio/pruebas-de-helicobacter-pylori-h-pylori/>]
- Upper GI Endoscopy [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diagnostic-tests/upper-gi-endoscopy>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/pruebas-diagnosticas/endoscopia-gastrointestinal-superior?dkrd=/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/pruebas-diagnosticas/endoscopia-esofagogastroduodenal>]
- Upper GI Series [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/diagnostic-tests/upper-gi-series>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/pruebas-diagnosticas/transito-esofagogastroduodenal>]

Treatments and Therapies

- Treatment for Peptic Ulcers (Stomach Ulcers) [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/peptic-ulcers-stomach-ulcers/treatment>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/informacion-de-la-salud/enfermedades-digestivas/ulceras-pepticas/tratamiento>]

Related Issues

- Helicobacter pylori (H. pylori) and Cancer [<https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/causes-prevention/risk/infectious-agents/h-pylori-fact-sheet>]  (National Cancer Institute)
Also in Spanish [<https://www.cancer.gov/espanol/cancer/causas-prevencion/riesgo/germenes-infecciosos/hoja-informativa-h-pylori>]

Specifics

- Zollinger-Ellison Syndrome [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/zollinger-ellison-syndrome>]  (National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases)

Videos and Tutorials

- Stomach ulcer [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/anatomyvideos/000133.htm>]  (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/anatomyvideos/000133.htm>]

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Duodenal Ulcer [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Duodenal+Ulcer%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Peptic Ulcer [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Peptic+Ulcer%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)
- ClinicalTrials.gov: Stomach Ulcer [<https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Stomach+Ulcer%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec>]  (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Novel Curcumin Floating Tablets for Spatial Delivery in Peptic Ulcer. [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40741132]
- Article: Global burden and risk factors of peptic ulcer disease between 1990... [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40644423]
- Article: Association between menopause, postmenopausal hormone therapy and peptic ulcer disease in... [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40624182]
- Peptic Ulcer -- see more articles [https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Peptic+Ulcer%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bdat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+]

Find an Expert

- American College of Gastroenterology [https://gi.org]
- Find a Gastroenterologist (GI Doctor) [https://gi.org/patients/find-a-gastroenterologist/] (American College of Gastroenterology)
- National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases [https://www.niddk.nih.gov] 

Teenagers

- Ulcers [https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/ulcers.html] (Nemours Foundation)
Also in Spanish [https://kidshealth.org/es/teens/ulcers.html]

Patient Handouts

- Culture - duodenal tissue [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003730.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/003730.htm]
- Peptic ulcer [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000206.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000206.htm]
- Tests for H pylori [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007501.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/007501.htm]
- Zollinger-Ellison syndrome [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000325.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000325.htm]



MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

Black or tarry stools [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003130.htm]

Culture - duodenal tissue [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003730.htm>]

Gastric tissue biopsy and culture [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003728.htm>]

Gastrin blood test [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003697.htm>]

Peptic ulcer [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000206.htm>]

Stomach ulcer [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/anatomyvideos/000133.htm>]

Tests for H pylori [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/007501.htm>]

Zollinger-Ellison syndrome [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000325.htm>]

Related Health Topics

Helicobacter Pylori Infections [<https://medlineplus.gov/helicobacterpyloriinfections.html>]

Stomach Disorders [<https://medlineplus.gov/stomachdisorders.html>]

National Institutes of Health

The primary NIH organization for research on *Peptic Ulcer* is the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases [<https://www.niddk.nih.gov>]

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