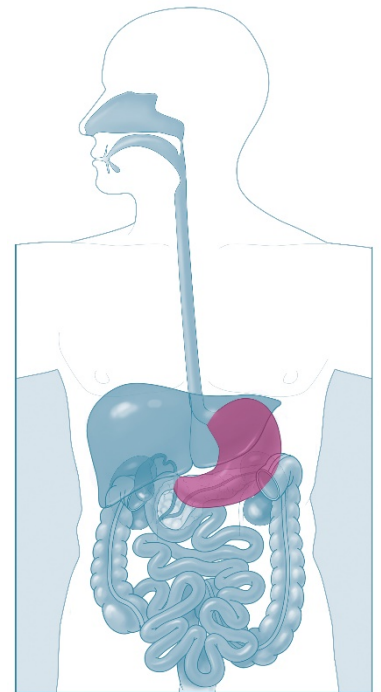


## DYSPEPSIA

# What Is Dyspepsia?

- ▶ **Dyspepsia**, also known as **indigestion**, can have multiple symptoms.
- ▶ Feelings of indigestion happen **during or after eating**.
- ▶ If you have indigestion you might feel:
  - **Full** during a meal.
  - Painful fullness after a meal.
  - **Heat, burning or pain** between your belly button and lower breastbone (upper belly).

**Note:** Indigestion is *not* the same as heartburn, but you may have symptoms of both health issues. If you suspect you have heartburn, ask your doctor for more information.



- ▶ Both men and women can get indigestion.
- ▶ People of any age, even infants, can get indigestion.
- ▶ About **one of every four people** get indigestion at some point.
- ▶ Indigestion can happen once in a while for some, or as often as every day for others.



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April 2016

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**DYSPEPSIA**

# Symptoms

You may have **one or more of these feelings** if you are experiencing indigestion:

- The feeling of being full or getting full quickly during a meal (and being unable to complete the meal).
- **Painful fullness** after a meal (as if food is staying in the stomach too long and not moving).
- Heat, burning or pain between your belly button and lower breastbone (in the upper belly); this pain can range from mild to very bad.

Some *less frequent* feelings that could be linked to indigestion are:

- Bloating (bad swelling in the stomach).
- Throwing up.
- Burping.
- Nausea.

**You should talk to your doctor if:**

- Your indigestion **lasts more than two weeks**.
- Your symptoms change (they get a lot worse or become more common or ongoing).
- You see **blood in your stool** (or you start throwing up blood).
- You experience sudden weight loss for no reason.
- You start having really bad belly pain.
- You have trouble swallowing.
- You start experiencing jaundice (when your skin and/or the whites of your eyes turn yellow).

SUN	MON	TUE	1	2	3	4
<del>5</del>	<del>6</del>	<del>7</del>	<del>8</del>	<del>9</del>	<del>10</del>	<del>11</del>
<del>12</del>	<del>13</del>	<del>14</del>	<del>15</del>	<del>16</del>	<del>17</del>	<del>18</del>
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	



## DYSPEPSIA

# Causes of Non-Ulcer Dyspepsia

There are a number of things that could cause the symptoms of indigestion.

For some, **certain actions can cause feelings of indigestion**, such as:

- *Eating too fast.*
- *Eating too much in one sitting.*
- Eating high-fat, greasy or spicy foods.
- Smoking.
- Drinking alcohol.
- Consuming too much caffeine.
- Taking some drugs.
- Experiencing stress.



If your indigestion **lasts for more than two weeks**, or you are having symptoms like bleeding, weight loss or trouble swallowing along with your indigestion, call your doctor as soon as possible, as it could be a sign of a more serious health problem.

Other causes of indigestion (non-ulcer dyspepsia) could be:

- *Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD).*
- *Peptic ulcer disease.*
- Problems of the pancreas or bile ducts.
- Gallstones.
- Gastritis.
- Cancer.



For some, indigestion may continue, but **no direct cause** can be found. This is called **functional dyspepsia** and could be linked to your stomach muscle not working as it should to move food to the small intestine. If this is the case, work with your doctor to figure out some **life changes that could help your symptoms**.

## Dyspepsia – What to Know:

- ▶ Dyspepsia, or indigestion, can have many symptoms.
- ▶ Dyspepsia, or indigestion, is not the same thing as heartburn.
- ▶ Certain lifestyle actions, like how and what you eat, can cause dyspepsia.
- ▶ Sometimes, dyspepsia is caused by a different health issue.
- ▶ You can often treat dyspepsia through changes in how you eat and live or with medication.



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## DYSPEPSIA

# Getting Tested

**Getting tested** for indigestion, or to find the cause of it, is **a key step to feeling better**.

Your doctor will also ask about your symptoms and past health issues, and will also feel your belly to see if everything feels normal. *To better keep track of your symptoms, try the MyGIHealth® App.*

Beyond this, **your doctor may choose to do:**

- An X-ray of the stomach and/or small intestine.
- An ultrasound of the belly.
- A blood, breath or stool test (to look for bacteria or allergies).
- An endoscopy (with biopsy).

## Endoscopy

- An endoscopy is done to get a small piece of tissue (biopsy) from your esophagus (the tube that links your mouth and stomach) to see if there is damage.
- You will be given medicine to block pain and make you feel relaxed and sleepy, so you won't feel much during the test.
- During the endoscopy, your gastroenterologist will use a long, thin (about the width of your little finger), flexible tube with a tiny camera on the end to look inside.
- The tube is passed through the mouth into the small intestine as your gastroenterologist does a careful exam to check for damage.

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## DYSPEPSIA

# Treatment

Your indigestion **symptoms are unique to you**. Work with your gastroenterologist to try to find out the cause of your indigestion, as this will lay the groundwork for the most helpful plan to handle your symptoms.

Your choices will depend on the cause of your indigestion. Talk to your doctor about which medications or options might be best for you.

### Lifestyle Changes

- **Don't smoke or use tobacco.**
- Don't drink alcohol, caffeine and carbonated drinks.
- **Eat several small, low-fat meals during the day.**
- Eat at a slow pace; chew food with care and fully.
- Allow enough time for meals (avoid fights during meals and excitement or exercise right after a meal).
- If possible, avoid taking aspirin or anti-inflammatory drugs (be sure to talk with your doctor first).
- Try to track your symptoms (try the MyGIHealth® App) to find out which foods cause your symptoms and do your best to cut those out of your diet.
- Don't eat right before you go to bed.
- Sleep with your head raised slightly.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Find ways to reduce stress.



## Medications

- **Acid-blocking medications** should only to be used at the dose and for the length of time showed on the label. Be sure to tell your doctor if you use over-the-counter (OTC) acid-blocking medications.
  - **Antacids** are available OTC and get rid of acid in the stomach.
    - Examples are:
      - Alka-Seltzer®.
      - Maalox®.
      - Mylanta®.
      - Rolaid®.
      - Riopan®.
    - Side effects may include diarrhea (loose stool) and constipation (hard stool or trouble passing stool).
  - **H2RAs** are available OTC and in prescription strength; they reduce stomach acid and work longer than antacids but not as quickly.
    - Examples are:
      - Pepcid®.
      - Zantac®.
    - Side effects may include headache, upset belly, throwing up, constipation, diarrhea and abnormal bleeding or bruising.
  - **Proton pump inhibitors (PPIs)** are available OTC and in prescription strength.
    - Examples are:
      - Prilosec®.
      - Prevacid®.
      - Protonix®.
      - Dexilant®.
    - Side effects may include back pain, aching, cough, headache, dizziness, belly pain, gas, nausea, throwing up, constipation and diarrhea.





- **Prokinetics** are helpful for people whose stomachs empty too slowly.
  - An example is:
    - Reglan®.
  - Side effects may include tiredness, sleepiness, depression (low mood), anxiety (feeling worried), jerky movements or spasms.
- **Antibiotics** may be prescribed if tests show bacteria.

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## DYSPEPSIA

# Things to Be Aware Of: Alarm Symptoms

**Indigestion (non-ulcer dyspepsia)** is pretty **common and often treatable**. But, there are a few cases where your symptoms could be a sign of a more serious problem, **mainly if you are over 50 years old**.

You could be at risk of having a more serious health issue if:

- You have lost weight without trying to.
- You have trouble swallowing.
- You can't stop throwing up.
- You have black, tarry stools.
- You have chest or belly pain with activity or if chest or belly pain is unrelieved by GI treatment.

*Call your doctor as soon as possible if you are having any of these symptoms.*

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