

Care Gram

Gastritis

What Is Gastritis?

Gastritis is a term used when the stomach lining is irritated and inflamed. Gastritis can be acute or chronic. Acute gastritis has only been present for a short time (days to several weeks). Gastritis, which persists over time, is called chronic gastritis.

If left untreated, chronic gastritis can:

- Last for years, even a lifetime
- Lead to severe blood loss
- Increase your risk of stomach cancer

What Causes Gastritis?

The most common causes of gastritis are:

- Prolonged use of aspirin or other anti-inflammatory drugs
- Helicobacter pylori (H. pylori) infection – a type of bacteria that lives in the mucous lining of the stomach
- Excess alcohol use
- Bile reflux – a backflow of bile (a substance produced in the gallbladder/liver) into the stomach

Less common causes include:

- Chronic vomiting
- Other viral or bacterial infections
- Pernicious anemia – a type of anemia in which the stomach cannot absorb and digest vitamin B12

What Are the Symptoms of Gastritis?

Symptoms of gastritis include:

- Nausea or recurring upset stomach
- Stomach bloating
- Stomach pain
- Vomiting
- Burning or gnawing feeling in the stomach between meals or at night
- Loss of appetite
- Vomiting blood or coffee ground-like material
- Black, tarry stools
- No symptoms at all



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How Is Gastritis Treated?

- Antacids and other medicines to reduce stomach acid
- An antibiotic, if your gastritis is caused by bacteria, such as *H. pylori*
- Vitamin B12 shots if your gastritis is caused by pernicious anemia

Gastritis most often goes away when the cause is corrected. Call your doctor:

- If you have severe stomach pain, blood in your vomit or black, tarry stools
- If your symptoms awaken you from sleep, keep you from eating, or interfere with work or school
- If your symptoms continue to get worse or do not improve within 6 weeks
- Before you stop any medicine
- Start any treatment on your own