

GASTRITIS

Gastritis is an irritation, inflammation, erosion, or infection of the stomach lining. The illness may be acute, or chronic. It is part of a spectrum of diseases which includes erosion and gastric ulcer.

The most frequent signs and symptoms are abdominal pain and cramps, black stool due to gastrointestinal bleeding, vomiting, appetite loss, fever, weakness, swollen abdomen, sharp, dull or annoying pain in the chest and/or abdomen, acid taste in the mouth, nausea, diarrhea, belching and gas.

The major causes stem from excess stomach acid caused by heavy drinking, smoking or overeating (especially foods you don't digest easily). Other causes can be bacterial infection, viral infection, caffeine, drugs or caustic agents.

The risk for gastritis increases with stress, including surgery and hospitalization for other problem, improper diet, smoking; drugs such as aspirin, nonsteroidal anti-inflammatories, cortisone, caffeine, and many more. The presence of a bacterium called *Helicobacter pylori* increases the risk for both ulcers and gastritis.

Preventive measures include eating and drinking in moderation; don't skip meals nor eat irregularly; avoid too hot or too spicy foods; don't smoke; and avoid medicines which irritate your stomach. Bleeding is an uncommon but dangerous complication, especially in the elderly.

Diagnosis is made by history and by examining the stomach through a gastroscope. A small amount of tissue may be removed for a biopsy. The goals of treatment are to relieve the symptoms and to eliminate the gastric irritant or other cause. Stop smoking. Hospitalization may be required if excessive bleeding occurs.

For minor discomfort use non-prescription antacids. Don't use aspirin. Your doctor may prescribe additional prescription drugs. Use a bland diet.

We at the Health Center will be happy to help you.



Healthfully yours,

Dr. Healthberry

For questions or comments you can;

Write "Healthberry" at
JMGray2@central.uh.edu
University Health Center
100 UH Health Center
Houston, Texas 77204-3019

E-Mail "Healthberry" at

Fax "Healthberry" at (713)743-5164