

Dyspepsia

Minor Ailment

What is dyspepsia?

Dyspepsia (or indigestion) and heartburn refers to pain or discomfort in the upper part of the abdomen or chest. They often occur after meals, and are commonly accompanied by burping, feeling bloated and nausea.

What are the possible causes of this condition?

Dyspepsia is often related to other diseases such as:

- Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD), a condition where the stomach acid flows back up the oesophagus, also known as the food pipe, and cause symptoms such as heartburn
- Peptic Ulcer Disease (PUD), a condition where ulcers form in the stomach or intestines
- Problems with the pancreas or bile duct
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), a condition that affects the large intestines and cause discomfort and pain
- *Helicobacter pylori* (H. pylori) infection
- Stomach cancer (rare)

The chance of getting dyspepsia increases if you:

- Drink a lot of alcohol
- Smoke
- Are overweight
- Have irregular eating habits
- Take certain medicines such as aspirin
- Often feel stressed or anxious
- Have other stomach problems such as stomach ulcers

What are the symptoms of dyspepsia?

The symptoms of this condition can include the following:

- Heartburn (burning, painful feeling at the chest or throat)
- Bloating
- Pain in the upper abdomen
- Nausea and vomiting
- Burping
- Early sense of fullness after eating

What can I do to treat dyspepsia?

Dyspepsia can be treated in the following ways and you can approach your pharmacist to get the following medications.

- Ranitidine
- Famotidine
- Omeprazole
- Domperidone
- Antacids (as tablets or liquids)

When do I need to see a doctor?

Although dyspepsia can be treated without a doctor's consultation, there are times where the condition might be more serious.

If your condition does not get better in two weeks or gets worse, you should see a doctor. You should also see a doctor if you experience any of the following:

- Frequent vomiting or you have blood in your vomit
- Weight loss or loss of appetite
- Black sticky stools
- Difficult or painful swallowing
- Shortness of breath, sweating, or pain that spreads to the jaw, neck, or arm

What else can I do to manage this condition?

The following are some suggestions to prevent dyspepsia from happening again:

- Avoid large meals and overeating
- Avoid lying down for two hours after eating
- Avoid drinking too much coffee, carbonated drinks, and/or alcohol
- Avoid eating too much fried or fatty foods, chili peppers and other spices
- Avoid tight fitting clothing and belts
- Avoid stooping or bending down too much after eating
- Try to decrease emotional as well as physical stress
- Eat your meals at regular timing
- Do not smoke or drink

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