



Patient Counseling Report

➤ GASTRITIS

WHAT IS GASTRITIS?

Gastritis is inflammation of the stomach lining which can be caused by one of several conditions. Possible causes include alcohol, excessive use of aspirin or ibuprofen or the presence of a bacterium called *Helicobacter pylori* (*H. pylori*). Gastritis can even develop as the result of bowel surgery or other diseases. In most situations effective treatment is available.

H. pylori is one of the most common causes of gastritis and affects nearly 2/3 of the world's population. It is the primary cause of peptic ulcers, which are small ulcers in the lining of the stomach. *H. Pylori* lives in the protective mucus layer of the stomach. The bacterium weakens the mucus layer and allows acid to reach the underneath stomach lining. This acid can irritate the stomach lining and cause an ulcer. If left untreated, this condition can cause recurrent ulcers and, in some instances lead to gastric (stomach) cancer.

HOW IS GASTRITIS DIAGNOSED?

Gastritis can often be found through a screening procedure called an endoscopy in which a tube-like device is used to examine the lining of the stomach and duodenum for changes that may indicate gastritis or peptic ulcer disease. Biopsies, which are small samples of the tissue, may be taken during the procedure and reviewed by a pathologist to determine if gastritis exists.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF GASTRITIS?

Individuals with gastritis from *H. Pylori* often live with this condition without suffering from significant symptoms. However, those with inflammation or ulcers can experience any range of symptoms ranging from mild to severe. The severity of symptoms is dependant on the amount of time the inflammation has been present and on its acuity. During acute phases, an individual may experience abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting. During more chronic phases, the abdominal pain will likely be more dull and the individual will likely experience a loss of appetite.

WHO IS AT RISK FOR DEVELOPING GASTRITIS?

The following factors can increase the risk of developing gastritis:

- Heavy smoking or alcohol use
- High caffeine intake
- Improper diet including spicy, greasy foods
- Use of drugs such as aspirin and anti-inflammatories
- Stress

WHAT TREATMENT OPTIONS DO I HAVE?

The treatment will vary depending on the cause of the gastritis. Only a physician can determine the most appropriate treatment. For individuals whose gastritis is caused by reflux of bile into the stomach from the duodenum and from aspirin or other anti-inflammatory drugs, medications are available to protect the lining of the stomach. These medications have been reported to help relieve symptoms for some patients with this form of gastritis.

The other group of individuals whose gastritis is caused by *H. pylori* infection can be effectively treated with medications as well. Antibiotics are used to treat the infection, either alone or in combination with other drugs designed to reduce the stomach acid. This therapy should help alleviate any symptoms and heal the inflammation.

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I ASK MY DOCTOR?

- Are there any other tests that we need to perform?
- What treatment do you suggest?
- What are the benefits and risks of this type of treatment?
- What are the chances of recurrence after my treatment plan?

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

- American Gastroenterological Association: www.gastro.org
- American College of Gastroenterology: www.acg.gi.org
- American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy: www.asge.org