

Peptic Ulcer

What is a peptic ulcer?

A peptic ulcer is an open sore in the lining of stomach, intestine, or esophagus. Peptic ulcers have different names, depending on their location. Gastric ulcers are peptic ulcers in the stomach. Duodenal ulcers are peptic ulcers in the small intestine. A peptic ulcer in the esophagus is called an esophageal ulcer. Peptic ulcers may be a short-term or long-term problem.

Risk factors

- Helicobacter pylori (H. pylori): a bacteria that can cause a stomach infection and inflammation
- Frequent use of aspirin, ibuprofen, and other anti-inflammatory drugs (risk associated with this behavior increases in women and people over the age of 60)
- Smoking
- drinking too much alcohol
- radiation therapy



Signs and symptoms

- burning abdominal pain that extends from the navel to the chest
- changes in appetite
- nausea
- bloody or dark stools (melena)
- unexplained weight loss
- indigestion
- vomiting
- chest pain

Diagnosis

- Blood tests may be done to test for H. pylori.
- A sample of bowel movement may be sent to a lab for tests. The test can show if H. pylori or if there is blood in bowel movements.
- An endoscopy uses a scope to see the inside of digestive system. A scope is a long, flexible tube with a light on the end. A camera may be used with the scope to take pictures. Samples may be taken from digestive system and sent to a lab for tests.
- An upper GI x-ray is a picture of stomach and intestines. Patient may be given a chalky liquid to drink before the pictures are taken. This liquid helps stomach and intestines show up better on the x-rays. An upper GI x-ray can show if person have an ulcer.

Treatment

- Medicines that decrease the amount of acid made by stomach may be given. Patient may also need medicines that protect stomach lining from acid and antibiotics to treat H. pylori infection.
- Surgery may be needed if other treatment does not heal ulcer. Surgery on the nerves in stomach may be done to help stomach make less acid. Another type of surgery removes part of stomach. Surgery may also be done to close an ulcer that has caused a perforation (tear) through stomach or intestines.

Clinical teaching

- Avoid tobacco products
- Avoid alcohol
- Use caution with aspirin and/or NSAIDs
- Don't ignore ulcer symptoms
- Protect from infections by washing hands regularly and consuming foods that have been cooked thoroughly

Reference : [Micromedex online solution](#)