

Dyspepsia (Indigestion)

What is dyspepsia?

Dyspepsia (dis-PEP-se-ah) is another name for indigestion. It can cause bloating, or make you feel full too early when you eat. It may also cause acid reflux (a burning pain that moves up from your stomach into your chest), nausea, or vomiting.

What causes it?

Dyspepsia can be caused by many things. However, in many people the cause is unknown. This is called functional dyspepsia.

In some cases of dyspepsia, your stomach may not be emptying properly, or you may have acid buildup. Sometimes you can get dyspepsia from taking over-the-counter pain medicines, such as ibuprofen (one brand: Motrin) or aspirin. Some people get ulcers in their stomach or intestines from bacteria called *Helicobacter pylori*. Infection from this bacteria can cause indigestion.

Sometimes dyspepsia can be a sign of something serious, such as gallstones. In rare cases, it may be a sign of stomach cancer. Other signs of serious disease include unplanned weight loss, anemia (a blood problem), loss of appetite, trouble swallowing, frequent vomiting, and indigestion symptoms that begin after

55 years of age. Talk to your doctor if you have these symptoms.

How is it treated?

You should stop taking over-the-counter pain medicines. Drinking less alcohol, quitting smoking, and changing your diet may help. Try to avoid foods that make your symptoms worse.

Indigestion may get worse if you are stressed or depressed. Your doctor can help you find healthy ways to cope with stress or talk to you about treating depression.

Can medicine help?

If you have pain or burning, your doctor may recommend medicine, such as ranitidine (one brand: Zantac) or omeprazole (one brand: Prilosec). There are other medicines that may help if you feel bloated or full. If you have a bacterial infection, you may need antibiotics.

Where can I get more information?

Your doctor

AAFP's Patient Education Resource

Web site: <http://familydoctor.org/474.xml>

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This handout is provided to you by your family doctor and the American Academy of Family Physicians. Other health-related information is available from the AAFP online at <http://familydoctor.org>.

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