



## CENTER OF SURGICAL EXCELLENCE

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### **H. pylori** **HELICOBACTER PYLORI INFECTION**

#### **What is H. pylori?**

This is a bacterium that infects the lining of the stomach. It commonly affects the elderly and the very young. Some people experience ulcer symptoms like burning, cramping, nausea or vomiting and others experience no symptoms whatsoever.

#### **How is H. pylori diagnosed?**

- **Blood Test** - Your doctor can do a blood test and send a sample of your blood to a lab for confirmation.
- **Breath Test** - Your doctor will give you a special liquid to drink and less than an hour later a sample of your breath is tested for a chemical reaction.
- **Endoscopy** - A small tube with a camera is inserted through the mouth passing into the stomach to look for inflammation and ulcers. Your doctor can also take a tissue sample to test for H. pylori.

#### **What are the risks of having H. pylori?**

Doctors have thought for many years that ulcers were related to stress, and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medicines such as aspirin. Recently it has been discovered the H. pylori is actually the cause of many ulcers.

The most common symptom is a burning pain in the abdomen which occurs when the stomach is empty and is relieved by eating food or taking antacids.

H. pylori can also cause a painful inflammation of the stomach called gastritis. These symptoms are upper-abdominal burning/pain, bloating and discomfort.

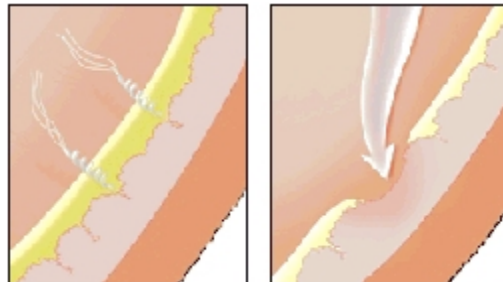
Long term infection with this bacterium causes inflammation and damage to the lining of the stomach

which is a risk factor for pre-cancerous changes of the lining of the stomach and cancer of the lining of the stomach.

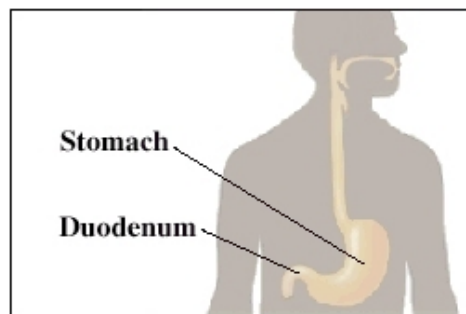
Despite these risks the majority of people who carry this bacterium in their stomachs never develop cancer.

#### **How is H. pylori treated?**

Your doctor will probably prescribe antibiotics so your ulcer can heal. Usually killing the H. pylori bacterium will keep the ulcer from returning.



H. pylori bacterium invades the lining of the digestive tract. Acid weakens the area.



An ulcer can form in two areas of the digestive tract, the stomach and the duodenum (where the stomach meets the small intestine).