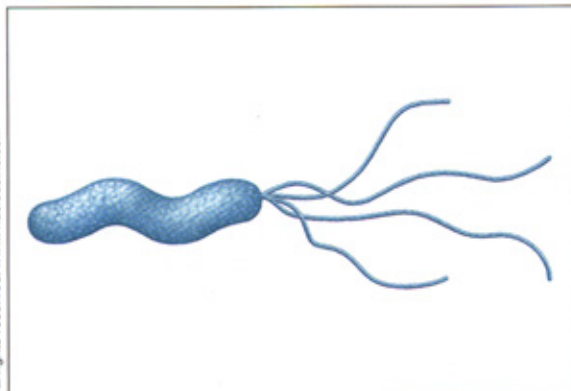


Helicobacter pylori Gastritis

Background Information *Helicobacter pylori* Gastritis



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Gastritis (inflammation of the lining of the stomach) has many causes. A common type of gastritis, called chronic gastritis, is usually caused by *Helicobacter pylori* (*H. pylori*), a bacterium that can live in the protective mucus layer of the stomach. Most people who are infected with *H. pylori* never suffer symptoms related to the bacterium, while a minority of those infected may experience abdominal pain/indigestion (dyspepsia). *H. pylori* infections are quite

common, afflicting approximately two-thirds of the world's population at one time or another. The bacterium weakens the mucus layer, allowing stomach acid to come into contact with the stomach lining. This acid can, in turn, damage the stomach or duodenal lining, causing an ulcer. If left untreated, this condition could cause recurrent ulcers and, in some instances, cancer. Persons infected with *H. pylori* have a significantly heightened risk of developing gastric cancer (adenocarcinoma and lymphoma).

Fortunately, *H. pylori* gastritis can be effectively treated with antibiotics. The surgical pathologist establishes the diagnosis of *H. pylori* gastritis by microscopic examination of a biopsy specimen. This knowledge is essential in determining if further treatment is necessary and, if so, what type will be most successful. The pathologist also evaluates the question of whether dysplasia (precancer) or cancer exists.

Treatment options for chronic gastritis

(Only a physician can determine the best therapy to treat your condition.)

Your physician may prescribe one of the following treatment options:

- Antibiotics and bismuth compounds
- Drugs to reduce acid secretions within the stomach

Implications of antibiotic therapy

- Discuss with your doctor and pharmacist the precautions you should take while on antibody therapy. For example, as with all antibiotic treatments, birth control pills may become less effective.
- Avoid excessive sun exposure because some antibodies may increase the skin's sensitivity to the sun.
- Avoid irritants that promote stomach inflammation, such as aspirin, alcohol, anti-inflammatory drugs and smoking.
- Ask your physician for dietary information and nutritional counseling.

Important questions to ask your doctor

- What will be my treatment for *H. pylori* gastritis?
- What are the benefits and/or drawbacks of treatment?
- After treatment, what will be my follow-up?
- Is there anything I can do to prevent *H. pylori* gastritis?
- Once I have completed my treatment, can *H. pylori* gastritis recur?

Sources of additional information

American College of Gastroenterology 703/820-7400 • www.acg.gi.org
Patient education brochures, current clinical updates and late-breaking news

American Gastroenterological Association 301/654-2055
www.gastro.org/public/digestinfo/html
Access to expert panels, support groups and detailed diagnostic and treatment information

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 888/698-5237 • www.cdc.gov/ulcer
Patient education and technical information

Heartburn Help www.heartburn-help.com
An open forum for patients to discuss their cases and gain information via access to an extensive database

Pharmaceutical Information Network www.pharminfo.com/disease/gastro/html
Access to articles, research news and discussion groups on many gastrointestinal disorders



Associated Pathology Medical Group, Inc.

www.apmglab.com or 800-848-2764