

WELLNESS review

Do you feel like your stomach's on fire?

Ulcers can be a pain in the stomach!

Ulcers (also known as peptic ulcers or gastric ulcers) are areas of damaged and inflamed tissue in the upper digestive tract that cause pain, indigestion and discomfort. These lesions can occur in the tissue lining the stomach (gastric ulcer) or the first part of the small intestine that leads out of the stomach, called the duodenum (peptic ulcer). It was once commonly thought that stress, smoking and diet were the only causes of stomach ulcers. However, the *Helicobacter pylori* (*H. pylori*) bacterium is now known to be responsible for most ulcers. This bacterium burrows into the lining of the stomach, causing pain and damaging the stomach lining. *H. pylori* infection causes about 60-80% of all stomach and duodenal ulcers.

What is H. pylori?

Helicobacter pylori (*H. pylori*) is a cork-screw shaped bacterium that makes itself at home in your digestive system, where it literally burrows into the lining of your stomach or duodenum, causing inflammation and damage. Over time, *H. pylori* may lead to the development of an ulcer. For some people *H. pylori* infection causes no signs or symptoms and doesn't lead to any complications, but for most sufferers, *H. pylori* causes indigestion and reflux and, eventually, ulcers.

Are you one of the 1 in 4 people that have H. pylori?

H. pylori infections are very common – with as many as 25-30% of all Australians and New Zealanders being affected. If you experience one or more of these symptoms, you may have a *H. pylori* infection:

- Decreased appetite
- Acid taste in the mouth
- Bad breath
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Indigestion and reflux
- Frequent burping
- Bloating
- Unexplained weight loss
- An ache or burning pain around your stomach

Natures answer to help manage ulcers

Unfortunately, modern medicines prescribed for *H. pylori* infection can cause many unpleasant side effects, and treatment is not always successful.

Some strains of *H. pylori* are even resistant to antibiotic treatment.

Fortunately, there are effective natural medicines that can be used to assist with the eradication of *H. pylori*, without the side effects. These include;

- **Lactoferrin:** Lactoferrin is a protein found naturally in the human body and in milk. It has antibacterial, antiparasitic and antifungal actions, and is particularly useful for *H. pylori* infections.
- **Turmeric:** *H. pylori* infections can result in pain, reflux and indigestion. Turmeric has been shown to be very effective for stomach pain and reflux and has been used traditionally as a digestive soother. Turmeric is also clinically proven to heal ulcers.
- **Essential oils:** Essential oils can support a healthy upper digestive system and help kill *H. pylori*. Wild marjoram and cinnamon essential oils have been used traditionally to improve sluggish digestion. These oils also support the antimicrobial actions of lactoferrin and turmeric, due to their antibacterial and antifungal actions.
- **Zinc carnosine:** Zinc carnosine is a form of zinc shown to inhibit the growth of *H. pylori* and reduce the inflammation associated with a *H. pylori* infection.
- **Fermented soy protein:** Fermented soy protein has been shown to reduce the symptoms of stomach ulcers, including heartburn, indigestion and digestive discomfort.

Reduce the risk

There are many factors that can increase your risk of getting a *H. pylori* infection and developing an ulcer, including;

- Stress
- Smoking
- Excessive alcohol consumption
- Excessive consumption of coffee and/or tea
- Taking certain anti-inflammatory medications on a regular basis

To reduce the risk of developing an ulcer, avoid the above risk factors, and eat a healthy well balanced diet, high in fruit, vegetables, whole grains and fish. Exercise and relaxation are also important lifestyle factors, to help reduce inflammation and stress.

Talk to us today!

If you are experiencing any of the symptoms of *H. pylori* infection, or have been diagnosed with this or an ulcer, make an appointment today. Your Natural Healthcare Practitioner can support you in making simple diet and lifestyle changes and recommend the right natural medicine to help assist you in getting your digestive system in tip-top condition once again!

For more information on these natural medicines, come in and speak to one of our Practitioners today.

