

Helicobacter Pylori Infection (H. Pylori)

What is H. Pylori and its cause?

H. Pylori is a type of bacteria that infects the lining of the stomach. Although the cause is unclear, H. Pylori is thought to be spread through contaminated food and water and by direct mouth-to-mouth contact. This bacteria is usually first acquired in childhood and does not always cause illness in people. However, H. Pylori puts people at risk of ulcers in the stomach and small intestine and is a risk factor for peptic ulcer disease.

SYMPTOMS OF H. PYLORI

- Frequent burping
- Ache or burning pain in abdomen
- Abdominal pain that is worse when stomach is empty
- Nausea/loss of appetite
- Bloating
- Unintentional weight loss

DIAGNOSIS

There are 4 different tests that are used to diagnose H. Pylori: blood test, breath test, stool test, and scope test (EGD).

The blood test will show evidence of an active or previous H. Pylori infection in the body, but breath and stool tests are more accurate at detecting active H. Pylori infections. Be sure to follow instructions provided for the breath test and stool test for accuracy.

TREATMENT

H. Pylori infection is treated with two antibiotics at once to help prevent the bacteria from developing a resistance to one particular antibiotic. An acid-suppressing medication is also used for treatment, to help the stomach lining heal.

The medications can cause stomach discomfort, but the medications **MUST** be finished to avoid recurrence of the infection and to eradicate the infection.