



QUEEN CITY

GASTROENTEROLOGY
& HEPATOLOGY

Helicobacter Pylori

Helicobacter pylori is a bacterium that lives in the lining of the stomach. In most cases, this germ does not seem to cause problems. However, in some people, helicobacter pylori can cause inflammation (gastritis) in the lining of the stomach or in the upper part of the small intestine (duodenum). Under these conditions, some people seem to develop ulcers-*if other factors are also present*. The factors that appear to be necessary for ulcers to develop include:

- The use of certain medications, such as aspirin or other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)
- Excessive alcohol use
- Smoking
- Stress
- Other illnesses

No one is certain how people get helicobacter pylori. The infection may be spread through contact with fecal matter, which may occur if people do not wash their hands after going to the bathroom. Family members of people with the bacteria are more likely to have it than others. This could mean that it has spread from person to person, or that it has been obtained through the same food sources.

If you have abdominal symptoms, such as pain or hunger that awakens you from sleep, you might suggest that your medical professional evaluate you for an ulcer. If an ulcer is found, additional testing for helicobacter pylori may be recommended.

Treatment usually includes a combination of antibiotics and medication to reduce the effects of the acid in your stomach. It is very important that people who are being treated for a helicobacter pylori infection take all the medications prescribed. A treatment plan that contains at least three medications is typically needed to cure helicobacter pylori. Such combination treatments are the most effective way to help ensure that the bacteria do not develop resistance to the antibiotics used to treat them. Initial treatment is effective about 90 percent of the time. Once it has been treated, helicobacter pylori is not likely to return. If the treatment does not work, or symptoms persist after treatment, it's important to let your medical professional know so further evaluation and treatment can be prescribed.

For more information on H. Pylori or if you think you might be at risk of having H. Pylori or stomach ulcers, please contact Queen City Gastroenterology & Hepatology office at 704-362-4403 to schedule an appointment.
