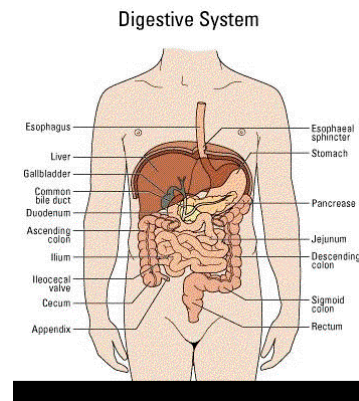


INDIGESTION

Indigestion is a catch-all term for assorted stomach discomforts. It is generally defined as persistent or recurrent abdominal pain that is centered in the upper abdomen. Indigestion itself is not life threatening but it can accompany serious problems and if this happens it should not be ignored.

COMMON CAUSES

- overeating
- eating too fast
- eating fatty or greasy foods
- overindulgence in alcohol
- eating spicy foods
- emotional trauma or nervousness
- acute gastritis
- chronic cholecystitis
- chronic gastritis
- chronic pancreatitis
- duodenal ulcer
- gastric ulcer
- drugs such as antibiotics and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)



Note: There may be other causes of indigestion. This list is not all inclusive, and the causes are not presented in order of likelihood. The causes of this symptom can include unlikely diseases and medications. Furthermore, the causes may

vary based on age and gender of the affected person, as well as on the specific characteristics of the symptom such as quality, time course, aggravating factors, relieving factors, and associated complaints. Use the Symptom Analysis option to explore the possible explanations for indigestion, occurring alone or in combination with other problems.

ASSOCIATED SYMPTOMS

- heartburn (when stomach acid flows back into the oesophagus which typically is a burning discomfort or pain felt in the stomach passing upwards behind the chest bone)
- sensation of bloating
- nausea and vomiting
- burping
- early satiety (a feeling of fullness that occurs soon after eating)

SELF-MANAGEMENT

- Avoiding foods and situation that seem to cause indigestion is the most successful way to treat it.
- Do not overeat, especially foods rich in fat or overindulging in alcohol.
- For smokers, try to quit smoking if you suffer from frequent indigestion, or at least try not to smoke right before a meal.
- For occasional heartburn, use antacids or bismuth subsalicylate.
- Relax after eating. Exercise diverts blood from the stomach, making digestion less efficient.
- Lead a stress-free lifestyle.

CALL YOUR DOCTOR IF:

- You have any abdominal pain which continues for more than 6 hours, this may indicate appendicitis, stomach ulcer, gallstones or other disease. You may need emergency care.
- You experience indigestion with any of the following:
 - prolonged vomiting, vomiting of blood, black or bloody bowel movements
 - severe upper abdominal pain, pain radiating into your neck and shoulder, shortness of breath or feeling weak or faint. Your ingestion may be part of a larger problem

such as gallstones, gastritis, GERD, pancreatic problems, stomach ulcer or possibly cancer. Or you might be having a heart attack: get medical help immediately.

- You have repeated bouts of indigestion accompanied by abdominal pain, fever or dark urine. Your discomfort may indicate gallstones, stomach ulcers or liver disease.
- Your indigestion consistently follows your eating of dairy products. You may suffer from lactose intolerance. You should avoid milk products or take an OTC medication such as Lactaid before eating dairy products.

REFERENCES:

1. Blackwell Science 3rd Edition: Symptoms in the Pharmacy – A Guide to the Management of Common Illnesses

Website :

<http://www.onhealth.com/ch1/condctr/gastro>

Self Care Guide, Pharmaceutical Services Division, Ministry of Health Malaysia

http://www.pharmacy.gov.my/self_care_guide

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