



# Dyspepsia

## Patient information leaflet



Common Ailments Service

**Only use this leaflet if your pharmacist has advised you about your condition.**

Dyspepsia (indigestion) is a common condition that affects most people at some time in their life.

Symptoms of dyspepsia come and go. They often happen after eating or drinking but sometimes happen for no obvious reason.

Dyspepsia symptoms include:

- feeling 'full up' or bloated
- belching or passing wind (burping and farting)
- feeling or being sick
- acid reflux (heartburn) - a painful, burning feeling in the chest caused by acid from the stomach coming up into the throat

Dyspepsia can be caused, or made worse, by:

- obesity
- pregnancy
- some foods like coffee, chocolate, tomatoes, fatty or spicy foods
- smoking
- alcohol
- stress, anxiety and depression
- some medicines (including aspirin and ibuprofen)



## Treatment and Prevention

### How to treat at home

Simple diet and lifestyle changes may be enough to make you feel better.

Try to:

- eat healthy foods (avoid coffee, chocolate, fatty or spicy foods)
- eat small meals
- have your evening meal no later than 3 to 4 hours before you go to bed
- lose weight, if you're overweight - [free NHS help is available](#)
- have less than 14 units of alcohol a week, spread across at least 3 days if you drink alcohol (there is no safe drinking level)
- give up smoking, if you smoke - [free NHS help is available](#)
- take part in activities you find relaxing - some people find yoga, meditation or exercise help with stress and anxiety
- wear loose fitting clothing around your waist
- avoid taking ibuprofen or aspirin - these can make indigestion worse
- raise the head of your bed by 10-20 cm - this can stop stomach acid coming up into your throat while you sleep



## Treatment and Prevention

### Medicines that can help

**These medicines are not suitable for everyone. Make sure you have asked your pharmacist for advice about what treatment is best for you.**

Medicines that can help with dyspepsia include **antacids**, **alginates** and **proton pump inhibitors** (PPIs).

**Antacids** are medicines that neutralise the acid in your stomach and help stop the symptoms of dyspepsia. They come as liquid or chewable tablets and can be bought from pharmacies or shops.

**Alginates** (brands include Gaviscon® or Peptac®) are a type of antacid that also help to protect the lining of the oesophagus (food pipe) from stomach acid. Alginates come in both liquid and tablet form. Take antacids after meals or at bedtime because this is when you're most likely to get indigestion or heartburn.

**Proton pump inhibitors** such as **omeprazole** or **lansoprazole** reduce the amount of acid your stomach produces. They come as capsules and are usually taken once a day. Some people find that they do not need to take a PPI every day and take it only when they have symptoms. Once you feel better (often after a few days or weeks), you can stop using it.

You can try taking one or more of the above treatments for up to 4 weeks. If you still have symptoms of dyspepsia after this you should make an appointment to see your GP.

**Always read the patient information leaflet that comes with your medicine.**

If you are concerned about any side effects from a treatment, report it to a doctor, nurse or pharmacist. You can also report side effects on the Yellow Card [app](#) or [website](#).



## When to Get Help

Chest pain has many different causes, including dyspepsia. Sometimes chest pain can be caused by a heart problem.

### Contact your GP or call 111 if you:

- still have symptoms of dyspepsia after 4 weeks
- are losing weight without meaning to, or have lost your appetite
- are having difficulty swallowing
- can feel a lump in your tummy
- keep feeling or being sick
- are short of breath or often feel tired – you may have iron deficiency anaemia

### Urgently contact your GP or call 111 if you:

- have severe pain
- feel breathless
- have chest pain that is triggered by physical exertion or stress
- have blood in your sick or poo

### Call 999 or go to A&E if you have pain that may be caused by a heart attack, for example pain that:

- is sudden and affects your neck, jaw, shoulder or back
- makes your chest feel tight or heavy
- starts with shortness of breath, sweating and feeling or being sick
- lasts more than 15 minutes

**If you are worried that your condition is not getting better, or is getting worse despite lifestyle changes and/or completion of a course of recommended medication, talk to your GP.**



## More information

For more information on symptoms of dyspepsia or a medicine, talk to your pharmacist or look at the following websites:

NHS 111 Wales: <https://111.wales.nhs.uk/Indigestion/>

Patient UK: <https://patient.info/digestive-health/dyspepsia-indigestion>

Medicines A-Z: <https://www.nhs.uk/medicines/>

Information from the above resources is included in this leaflet.



Mae'r daflen hon hefyd ar gael yn Gymraeg. This leaflet is also available in Welsh.

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