

Natural Remedies and Medical Approaches to Treating Stomach Ulcers

Harriet Louise*

Department of Gastroenterology, University of Verona, Italy

Description

Stomach ulcers, also known as peptic ulcers, are open sores that develop on the stomach's lining or the upper part of the small intestine. Affecting millions globally, they often result from imbalances in digestive fluids or bacterial infections. Understanding the symptoms, causes, and treatments is crucial for effectively managing this common yet potentially severe condition. Stomach ulcers are a type of peptic ulcer that specifically affect the stomach lining. These ulcers form when the protective mucus lining is eroded, leading to sores and open wounds on the stomach's inner surface. Most stomach ulcers result from an infection by *Helicobacter pylori* bacteria, excessive use of NSAIDs (nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs), or chronic stress, which increases stomach acid production. Ulcers can affect anyone but are most common in adults, especially those with a family history of ulcer-related issues, frequent NSAID usage, or high levels of stress. This bacterium is found in the stomach lining of nearly half the global population. While not all carriers develop ulcers, *H. pylori* disrupts the stomach's protective mucus layer, making the stomach lining vulnerable to acidic digestive juices. Infection often occurs through contaminated food, water, or close contact with an infected person. NSAIDs, such as aspirin, ibuprofen, and naproxen, are often used for pain relief but can erode the stomach's mucus lining over time. Chronic NSAID use reduces the stomach's ability to produce protective prostaglandins, increasing ulcer risk. Although previously thought to be a primary cause, lifestyle factors like smoking, heavy alcohol consumption, and high-stress levels are now understood to exacerbate rather than directly cause ulcers. Smoking, for instance, slows ulcer healing, while alcohol increases acid production, making the stomach more prone to damage. Some individuals

are genetically predisposed to developing ulcers due to family history or genetic factors affecting stomach acid production and digestive health. This is the hallmark symptom, often described as a burning or gnawing sensation in the middle or upper stomach. Pain typically worsens between meals or at night and can be temporarily relieved by eating or taking antacids. Individuals may feel excessively full or experience frequent burping, which often accompanies the ulcer pain. Severe cases may lead to nausea and vomiting, which is particularly concerning if it contains blood or resembles coffee grounds (a sign of bleeding in the digestive tract). Ulcers can reduce appetite, either because of pain associated with eating or due to a general feeling of discomfort. This is a sign of gastrointestinal bleeding, which can occur if the ulcer erodes into a blood vessel. Symptoms can vary based on the ulcer's severity, location, and the patient's overall health. If untreated, ulcers can lead to severe complications, including bleeding, perforation (a hole in the stomach wall), and obstruction (a blockage in the digestive tract). This involves inserting a thin, flexible tube with a camera (endoscope) into the stomach. It provides a clear view of the ulcer and allows for biopsies to detect *H. pylori* infection. Since *H. pylori* is a common cause, doctors may conduct tests such as urea breath tests, stool antigen tests, or blood tests to confirm the presence of this bacterium.

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None.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

*Corresponding author: Harriet Louise, Department of Gastroenterology, University of Verona, Italy, E-mail: harriet_l@gmail.com

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