

Patient information

Bile Gastritis

General Surgery - Aintree Hospital

What is Gastritis?

Gastritis is inflammation of the lining of the stomach.

It can be caused by irritation due to excessive alcohol use, chronic vomiting, stress or the use of certain medications such as aspirin or other anti-inflammatory drugs.

It may also be brought on by any of the following:

- **Helicobacter pylori (H. pylori):** A bacterium that lives in the mucous lining of the stomach. Without treatment, the infection can lead to ulcers and, in some people, to stomach cancer.
- **Pernicious anaemia:** A form of anaemia that occurs when the stomach lacks a naturally occurring substance (intrinsic factor) needed to properly absorb and digest vitamin B12.
- **Infections** caused by bacteria and viruses.

Bile reflux or Bile Gastritis:

Bile gastritis is a stomach inflammation that starts when bile produced by the liver leaks into the stomach.

Over time, the bile erodes the stomach lining and can even reach the oesophagus, leading to heartburn.

Bile gastritis is rare, but people who have had their gallbladder removed or have had stomach or weight-loss surgery are at risk for it.

This is because the procedures can disrupt how the body stores bile, making it more likely the fluid will surface in places that it doesn't belong.

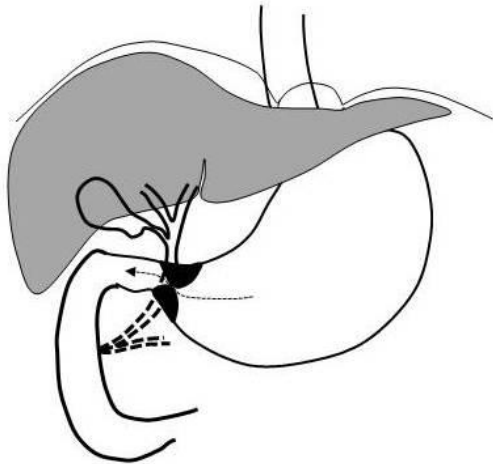
Facts about bile gastritis

Bile is a greenish yellow fluid produced by the liver to break down fat, remove toxic materials, and aid in digestion.

After produced from liver some of it is stored in the gallbladder and released when you eat food containing fat.

In healthy adults, the fluid moves from liver and gall bladder through one of two tubes (called the bile duct) to the top part of the small bowel (called duodenum).

In the small bowel the bile is essential for digestion of fatty contents of the food eaten (butter, cheese, oils etc).



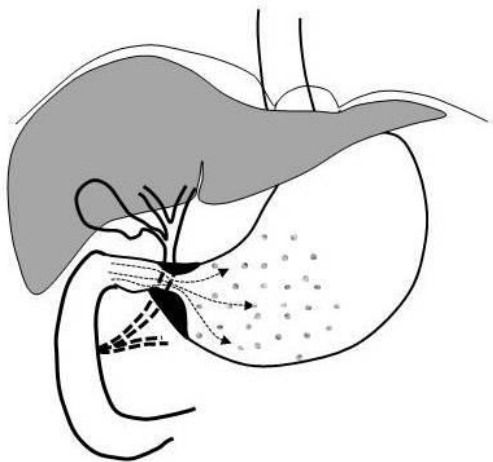
Normal valve – flow out of stomach

But bile in the small intestine can wash back into the stomach, a condition called reflux. The acidic fluid can eat away at the stomach's mucous lining, causing redness and irritation, a condition commonly called gastritis. Over time, this can cause severe pain. It's similar to classic heartburn, in which acidic food in the stomach seeps back up into the esophagus.

The cause of bile gastritis is often a damaged pyloric valve, the ring between the stomach and small bowel.

The valve is meant to open slightly so that food—but not bile—moves to the small intestine.

When the valve opens too much, the bile can leak back (reflux) into the stomach and causes pain.



Incompetent valve – back-flow into stomach causing inflammation of lining

What are the Symptoms and Signs of Gastritis in general?

1. Many people with gastritis experience no symptoms at all. The diagnosis is made during endoscopic (camera) examination of stomach for other causes/symptoms.
2. A peptic ulcer may accompany gastritis.
3. Abdominal pain is the most common symptom; the pain may be dull, vague, burning, aching, gnawing, sore, or sharp pain is usually located in the upper central portion of the abdomen, but it may occur anywhere from the upper left portion of the abdomen around to the back.
4. Other signs and symptoms may include:
 - Nausea.
 - Vomiting (if present, may be clear, green or yellow, blood streaked, or completely bloody, depending on the severity of the stomach **inflammation**).
 - **Belching** (if present, usually does not relieve the pain much).
 - **Bloating**.
 - Feeling full after only a few bites of food.
 - Loss of appetite.
 - Unexplained weight loss.

How is Bile Gastritis Diagnosed?

A doctor diagnoses bile gastritis by looking inside the body with a long, thin tube that contains a light and a tiny camera, a procedure known as an endoscopy, to see where bile is going.

The diagnosis of Bile Gastritis is not always easy from symptoms. Only endoscopy (camera examination) of stomach with biopsies may give clues to the diagnosis.

- Endoscopy - to check for stomach lining inflammation and mucous erosion.

This may also show that the lower sphincter (pylorus) of stomach is constantly open suggesting incompetence.

This incompetence allows bile from bowel to come back into the stomach and burn the stomach lining.

- Stomach biopsy – from lower stomach suggests chemical or reflux gastritis.

How is Bile Gastritis Treated

Coping Strategies for Symptoms of Bile Gastritis

If you are at high risk for bile gastritis, your doctor may suggest certain diet and lifestyle changes.

This may include –

- A. Avoid acidic foods – such as acidic fruits or acidic fruit juices, tomatoes and spicy foods.
- B. Eating small meals.
- C. Alcohol – can exacerbate symptoms and is best avoided.
- D. Smoking – can similarly exacerbate symptoms.
- E. Too much caffeine in any form (excessive consumption of coffee, tea or coke/pepsi-like drinks) will also worsen symptoms..

Keeping a Food/Symptoms Diary – Keeping a food diary along with timing of symptoms is extremely helpful. It will give you clues as to which foods can consistently cause symptoms and hence should be avoided.

Usually it is best to keep a diary for about three to six months.

Bile gastritis is a difficult condition to treat.

If bile continues to backflow into the stomach on a daily basis and causes severe pain, medication is typically the next step.

Symptomatic and Medical Treatment:

1. Unlike acid problems, bile reflux is not helped by antacids or PPIs (standard medications for acid problems such as omeprazole or lansoprazole).
2. **Cold milk or gaviscon (antacid)** can be used for instant short term relief, but do not affect healing of inflamed stomach.
3. **Bread/toast or use of yogurt drinks** such as Danone, Yakult or Benecol can help.
4. **Medications** that help stomach to empty more efficiently are used commonly (Domperidone and/or metoclopramide – These can be used safely only for short durations over days or few weeks).

Doctors may also prescribe sucralfate to protect the stomach lining from the bile so healing can occur.

Colestyramine is a bile binding agent, which has recently shown benefit in some patients with severe symptoms.

Surgical Treatment:

Generally, surgery is not recommended for this condition. This is because the surgery proposed to divert bile away from stomach is complicated and may not necessarily help.

Also the side effects of surgery can be sometimes more annoying than the symptoms of bile gastritis itself.

This type of surgery (bile diversion surgery) may be considered as a last resort for management of bile gastritis.

Your doctor or a specialist is best placed to advise you on appropriate treatment.

Bile gastritis is an annoying condition and may need long term dietary and lifestyle changes to help cope with the symptoms.

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Further information

If you have any questions please contact

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