

## Stomach ache

### WHAT IS A STOMACH ACHE?

A stomach ache is simply **pain in the abdomen**. Sometimes its cause is hard to identify. A stomach ache is sometimes associated with a burning sensation, bloating, nausea or even vomiting.

### WHAT ARE THE CAUSES?

Abdominal pain can have many causes, but here we only cover a few of them. Firstly, there is what we call **gastroesophageal reflux**. This occurs when part of the stomach contents comes back up into the oesophagus. The stomach wall is covered by a gel-like substance, called 'mucus', to protect it from the acidity of the gastric juices. However, the oesophagus does not have this protective mechanism, so it is irritated when the contents of the stomach come back up.

Another cause of stomach ache is **peptic ulcers**. Peptic ulcers are open wounds that form when the stomach or duodenal wall is destroyed by gastric juices. Since these juices are acidic, they can damage the wall of the digestive tract.

**Gastritis** can also cause stomach aches. This is an inflammation of the stomach's mucous membrane, which can be caused by a bacterial infection or even prolonged intake of anti-inflammatories.

If we eat a high-fat meal, the liver synthesises a large amount of bile salts. If the liver cannot make enough bile salts, we may suffer from digestive problems, such as abdominal pain or diarrhoea. You may have heard this called an **upset stomach**.

## 4.4.5 Stomach ache

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Stomach ache is...

- abominable pain
- phantom pain
- abdominal pain

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A gastroesophageal reflux is when some of the contents of the stomach come back up into...

- the colon
- the oesophagus
- the mouth

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We may feel a burning sensation when we have gastric reflux because the oesophagus is not coated with...

- foam
- saliva
- mucus

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A peptic ulcer is a lesion in the lining of the stomach or duodenum. What causes the pain?

- gastric juices
- food
- mucus

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Why can gastric juices aggravate a peptic ulcer?

- Because they are acidic
- Because they are bitter
- Because they are alkaline

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Gastritis is...

- an inflammation
- production of gas
- a gourmet dish

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Gastritis is an inflammation of the mucous membrane of the...

- lungs
- oesophagus
- stomach

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Gastritis cannot be caused by...

- anti-inflammatories
- a lung infection
- a bacterial infection

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Queasiness is caused by the production of large amounts of...

- minerals
- bile
- enzymes

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The body produces large amounts of bile after a meal that was...

- accompanied by plenty to drink
- rich in protein
- rich in fat

## Answers

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### Stomach ache is...

- abominable pain**  
*Wrong! That was a trick answer.*
- phantom pain**  
*Wrong! Good try, though!*
- abdominal pain**  
*Well done! That's right!*

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### A gastroesophageal reflux is when some of the contents of the stomach come back up into...

- the colon**  
*Wrong! Your small intestine separates your colon from your stomach.*
- the oesophagus**  
*Well done! That's right!*
- the mouth**  
*Wrong! It is lower than that.*

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### We may feel a burning sensation when we have gastric reflux because the oesophagus is not coated with...

- foam**  
*Wrong! Too bad, that is not the right answer.*
- saliva**  
*Wrong! That's not the correct answer.*
- mucus**  
*Well done! Mucus protects your stomach from being attacked by gastric juice. There isn't any mucus in your oesophagus.*

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### A peptic ulcer is a lesion in the lining of the stomach or duodenum. What causes the pain?

- gastric juices**  
*Well done! That's right!*
- food**  
*Wrong! That is not the right answer.*
- mucus**  
*Wrong! Mucus protects your stomach but it is not effective if the lining is damaged.*

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### Why can gastric juices aggravate a peptic ulcer?

- Because they are acidic**  
*Well done! If there is a lesion in the lining of your stomach, the acidity of gastric juices will damage your stomach wall.*
- Because they are bitter**  
*Wrong! That is not the correct answer.*
- Because they are alkaline**  
*Wrong! Try again!*

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### Gastritis is...

- an inflammation**  
*Well done! It is an inflammation of the stomach's mucous membrane.*
- production of gas**  
*Wrong! That's not the correct answer!*
- a gourmet dish**  
*Wrong! That's not the right answer.*

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### Gastritis is an inflammation of the mucous membrane of the...

- lungs**  
*Wrong! Your lungs are not part of your digestive system.*
- oesophagus**  
*Wrong! That's not the right answer.*
- stomach**  
*Well done! Gastritis is the cause of stomach ache.*

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### Gastritis cannot be caused by...

- anti-inflammatories**  
*Wrong! Long-term administration of anti-inflammatory medication is one of the causes of gastritis.*
- a lung infection**  
*Well done! This is not one of the causes of gastritis.*
- a bacterial infection**  
*Wrong! Bacterial infections can cause gastritis.*

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### Queasiness is caused by the production of large amounts of...

- minerals**  
*Wrong! Minerals cannot cause queasiness.*
- bile**  
*Well done! Queasiness is caused by the production of large amounts of bile.*
- enzymes**  
*Wrong! That's not the correct answer.*

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### The body produces large amounts of bile after a meal that was...

- accompanied by plenty to drink**  
*Wrong! Nice try, though!*
- rich in protein**  
*Wrong! That's not the correct answer.*
- rich in fat**  
*Well done! Bile is produced to digest fat.*