

DIAGNOSTICS

update.com

Issue No: 7 First Quarter 2014

CANCER:

Types, Stages,
Symptoms,
Treatment
& More

STOMACH
ULCERS

+ OBESITY IN
CHILDREN



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Years ago I never would have ever imagined I would be in this

position, and it is amazing. To say I really enjoy this job is an understatement.

What makes Diagnostics Update.com so unique is their informative and educative ways to the nation.

The staff and management is always looking for ways to inform there readers on how to tackle different medical issues. Basically, you want more people

to enjoy reading more and more.

That said, there is still the need to get more readers to embrace healthy routines within and outside the homestead. This October/November/December issue we focus more on the winter/spring season ailments. We take a look at different ways to keep healthy.

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TYPES OF CANCER

BRAIN CANCER

Brain cancer can have a wide variety of symptoms including seizures, sleepiness, confusion, and behavioral changes. Not all brain tumors are cancerous, and benign tumors can result in similar symptoms.

Types of Brain Cancer

Cancer of the brain are abnormal growths of cells in the brain. Although such growths are popularly called brain tumors, not all brain tumors are cancer. Cancer is a term reserved for malignant tumors. Malignant tumors grow and spread aggressively, overpowering healthy cells by taking their space, blood, and nutrients. Like all cells of the body, tumor cells need blood and nutrients to survive. Tumors that do not spread aggressively are called benign.

Primary Brain Cancers

The brain is made up of many different types of cells. Some brain cancers occur when one type of cell transforms from its normal characteristics. Once transformed, the cells grow and multiply in abnormal ways. As these abnormal cells grow, they become a mass, or tumor.

METASTATIC BRAIN CANCER

Metastatic brain tumors are made of cancerous cells from a tumor elsewhere in the body. The cells spread to the brain from another tumor in a process called metastasis. About 25% of tumors elsewhere in the body metastasize to the brain.

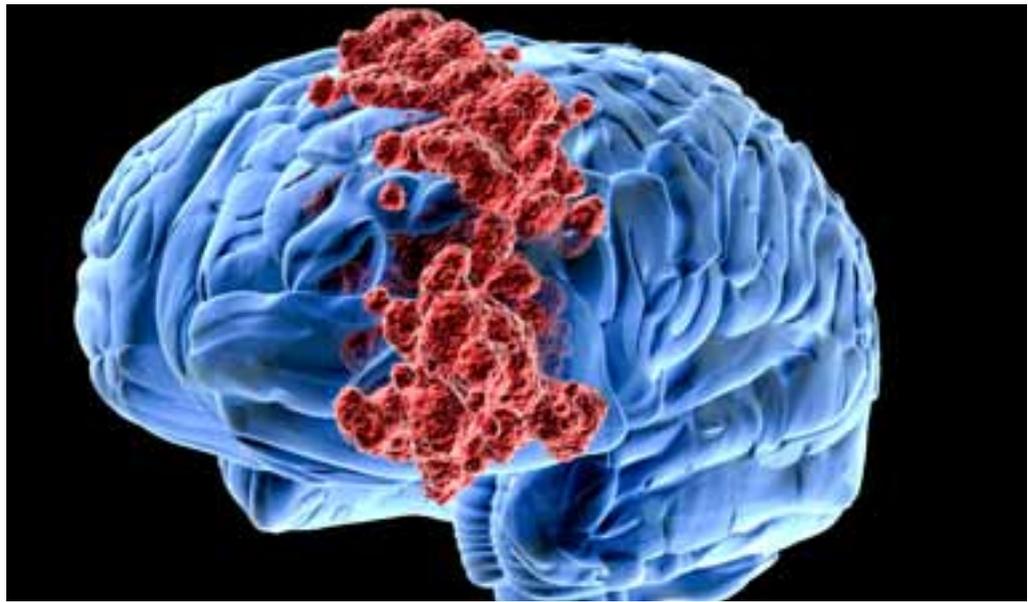
Brain Cancer Symptoms

Not all brain tumors cause symptoms, and some (such as tumors of the pituitary gland) are often not found until after death. The symptoms of brain cancer are numerous and not specific to brain tumors, meaning they can be caused by many other illnesses as well. The only way to know for sure what is causing the symptoms is to undergo diagnostic testing. Symptoms can be caused by:

A tumor pressing on or encroaching on other parts of the brain and keeping them from functioning normally.
Swelling in the brain caused by the tumor or surrounding inflammation.
The symptoms of primary and metastatic brain cancers are similar.

The following symptoms are most common:

- | Headache
- | Weakness



Brain tumors are abnormal cells within the brain, some of which are noncancerous (benign) and some that are cancerous.

- | Clumsiness
- | Difficulty walking
- | Seizures

Other nonspecific symptoms and signs include the following:

- | Altered mental status -- changes in concentration, memory, attention, or alertness
- | Nausea, vomiting
- | Abnormalities in vision
- | Difficulty with speech
- | Gradual changes in intellectual or emotional capacity

In many people, the onset of these symptoms is very gradual and may be missed by both the person with the brain tumor and the family. Occasionally, however, these symptoms appear more rapidly. In some instances, the person acts as if he or she is having a stroke.

When to Seek Medical Care

See your health care provider right away if you have any of the following symptoms:

- | Unexplained, persistent vomiting
- | Double vision or unexplained blurring of vision, especially on only one side
- | Lethargy or increased sleepiness
- | New seizures
- | New pattern or type of headaches

Although headaches are thought to be a common symptom of brain cancer, they may not occur until late in the progression of the disease. If any significant change in your headache pattern occurs, your health care provider may suggest that you go the hospital.

If you have a known brain tumor, any new symptoms or relatively sudden or rapid worsening of symptoms warrants a trip to the nearest hospital emergency department. Be on the lookout for the following new symptoms:

- | Seizures
- | Changes in mental status, such as excessive sleepiness, memory problems, or inability to concentrate
- | Visual changes or other sensory problems
- | Difficulty with speech or in expressing yourself
- | Changes in behavior or personality
- | Clumsiness or difficulty walking
- | Nausea or vomiting (especially in middle-aged or older people)
- | Sudden onset of fever, especially after chemotherapy.

Causes of Brain Cancer

As with tumors elsewhere in the body, the exact cause of most brain cancer is unknown. Genetic factors, various environmental toxins, radiation, and cigarette smoking have all been linked to cancers of the brain. In most cases, no clear cause can be shown.

The following factors have been proposed as possible risk factors for primary brain tumors. Whether these factors actually increase your risk of a brain tumor is not known for sure.

Radiation to the head
Certain inherited conditions
HIV infection

source:<http://www.webmd.com>

TYPES OF CANCER

BREAST CANCER

Breast Cancer Symptoms

There are often no symptoms of breast cancer, but sometimes women may discover a breast problem on their own. Signs and symptoms to be aware of may include:

- | A painless lump in the breast
- | Changes in breast size or shape
- | Swelling in the armpit
- | Nipple changes or discharge
- | Breast pain can also be a symptom of cancer, but this is not common.

Signs of Inflammatory Breast Cancer

Inflammatory breast cancer is a rare, fast-growing type of cancer that often causes no distinct lump. Instead, breast skin may become thick, red, and may look pitted -- like an orange peel. The area may also feel warm or tender and have small bumps that look like a rash.



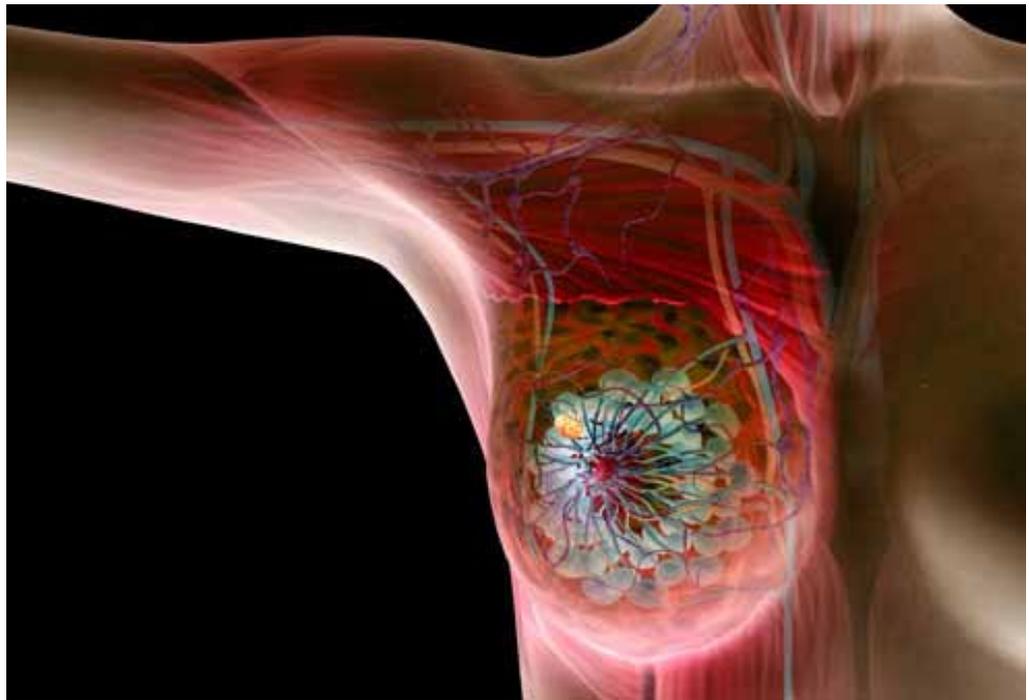
A photo of inflammatory breast cancer

Breast Cancer and Mammograms

The earlier breast cancer is found, the easier it is to treat. And mammograms, X-rays of the breast, can detect tumors before they are large enough to feel. The American Cancer Society recommends yearly mammograms beginning at age 40 for women at average risk. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends a screening mammogram every two years from age 50 to 74. It also notes that before age 50, each woman should check with a doctor to find out what screening schedule is right for her, considering the potential benefits and harms.

Breast Self-Exams

It was once widely recommended that women check their own breasts once a month. But studies suggest these breast self-exams play a very



Breast cancer illustration

small role in finding cancer. The current thinking is that it's more important to know your breasts and be aware of any changes, rather than checking them on a regular schedule. If you want to do breast self-exams, be sure to go over the technique with your doctor.

Breast Biopsy

The only sure way to determine whether a lump is cancer is to do a biopsy. This involves taking a tissue sample for further examination in the lab, sometimes through a small needle. Sometimes surgery is done to take part of or the entire lump for testing. The results will show whether the lump is cancer, and if so, what type. There are several forms of breast cancer, and treatments are carefully matched to the type of cancer.



breast biopsy

Hormone-Sensitive Breast Cancer

Some types of breast cancer are fueled by the hormones estrogen or progesterone. A biopsy can reveal whether a tumor has receptors for estrogen (ER-positive) and/or progesterone (PR-positive). About two out of three breast cancers are hormone sensitive. There are several medications that keep the hormones from promoting further cancer growth.

HER2-Positive Breast Cancer

In about 20% of patients, breast cancer cells have too many receptors for a protein called HER2. This type of cancer is known as HER2-positive, and it tends to spread faster than other forms of breast cancer. It's important to determine whether a tumor is HER2-positive, because there are special treatments for this form of cancer.

Breast Cancer Stages

Once breast cancer has been diagnosed, the next step is to determine how big the tumor is and how far the cancer has spread. This process is called staging. Doctors use Stages 0-4 to describe whether cancer is localized to the breast, has invaded nearby lymph nodes, or has spread to other organs, such as the lungs. Knowing the stage and type of breast cancer will help your health care team formulate a treatment strategy.

source:<http://www.webmd.com>

STOMACH ULCERS

**Pains in abdomen can be stomach ulcers...!!
Heal it naturally**

All of us may have experienced stomach pains or abdominal pains at least once in a lifetime and it is very hard to find someone who hasn't!! The pains in abdomen may be caused from mild indigestion to cancers of stomach, but in our most modern era of life a major contribution is made by peptic ulcers. Unfortunately, people assume all the chronic abdominal pains are from ulcers in the stomach. But only a small portion of the abdominal pains are caused by ulcers in the stomach or intestine.

How we can assess whether pain is from ulcers?

It is so simple, just observe the pain!! Mostly the ulcer pains will have a relation with eating, the pains usually come immediately after eating or it will get relieved after eating. The pains will be burning or gnawing in nature, may or may not be associated with vomiting, bleeding in rectum etc.

What is peptic ulcer?

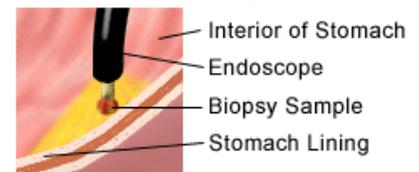
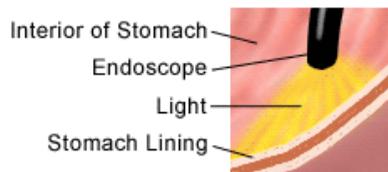
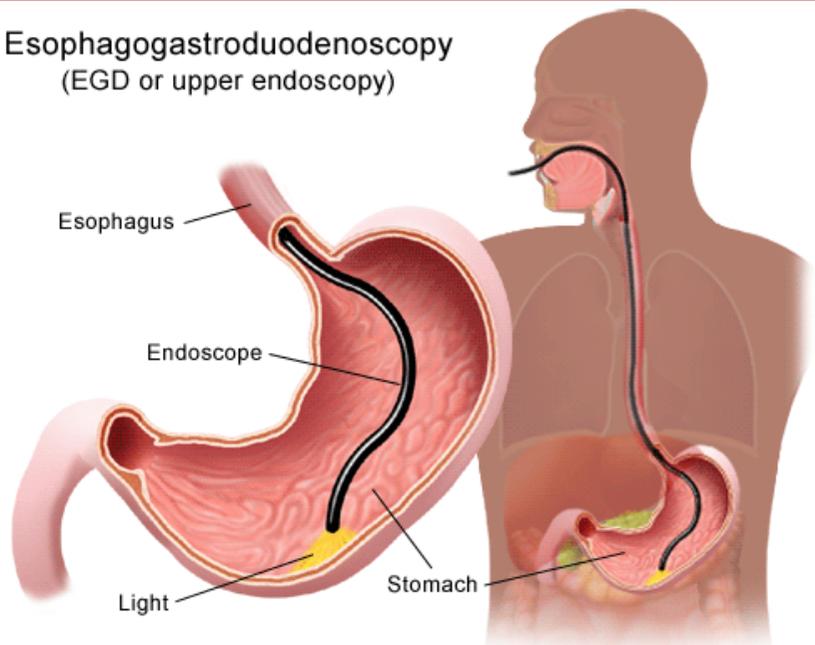
As the name says, it is the ulceration in the lining of the stomach or part of intestine, called the duodenum.

What causes peptic ulcer?

No single cause has been found for peptic ulcers. However, it happens as an end result of increased stomach acids in the stomach and duodenum. There are several factors which increase the secretion of stomach acid

- **Stress and anxiety:** There is clear evidence that stress and anxiety can increase the stomach acid production and increase the risk of developing ulcers in the stomach
- **Smoking and alcoholism:** No doubt, the smoking and alcoholism damages the intestinal and stomach lining and contribute to ulcer formation.
- **Irregular diet habits:** In 90% of the people with peptic ulcers, there will be a history of not taking the food at a regular time. Leaving

Esophagogastroduodenoscopy (EGD or upper endoscopy)



- the stomach empty can cause acidity in the stomach and it will damage the intestinal lining, ultimately end up in forming ulcers.
- **Drugs** like aspirin, ibuprofen, naproxen, NSAID's, steroids etc. taken over a long period of time increase stomach acidity and contribute to ulcerations.
 - **Helicobacter pylori:** These bacteria are commonly found in the linings of the stomach. About 90% of duodenal ulcers and 75% of stomach ulcers are caused by these bacteria, which attacks the walls of the stomach.

Who Is More Likely to Get Ulcers?

- You may be more likely to develop ulcers if you:
- Are infected with the H. pylori bacterium
 - Taking NSAIDs such as aspirin, ibuprofen, or naproxen for long time
 - Have a family history of ulcers
 - Drinking alcohol regularly
 - Chronic smoker.
 - Taking your meals irregularly.

What are symptoms of Peptic ulcer?

- **Stomach ulcer:** The pain comes immediately after eating and it starts

whenever you eat something.

- **Duodenal ulcer:** The pain happens 1-1/2 hours after eating and if you eat something it goes away.

The pains will be burning or gnawing between the breastbone and navel. This is usually accompanied by heartburn, nausea, loss of appetite and indigestion. Sometimes vomiting and blood in the stool may occur if the ulcer bleeds.

How serious is an ulcer?

Though ulcers often heal on their own; if ignored or not properly treated, sometimes it can lead to serious health problems like

- **Bleeding**
- **Breakage and perforation** (a hole through the wall of the stomach)
- **Gastric outlet** obstruction from swelling or scarring of the ulcers, which will block the passageway from the stomach to the intestine.

This happens mostly when we are taking NSAID's or painkillers for the warning signs like abdominal pain continuously. So be very careful when taking painkillers for abdominal pains without proper diagnosis.

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STOMACH ULCERS

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How ulcers are diagnosed?

Most of the ulcers can be diagnosed from the symptoms itself. Procedures like endoscopy, barium meal x-ray help to confirm the diagnosis.

How to prevent peptic ulcers?

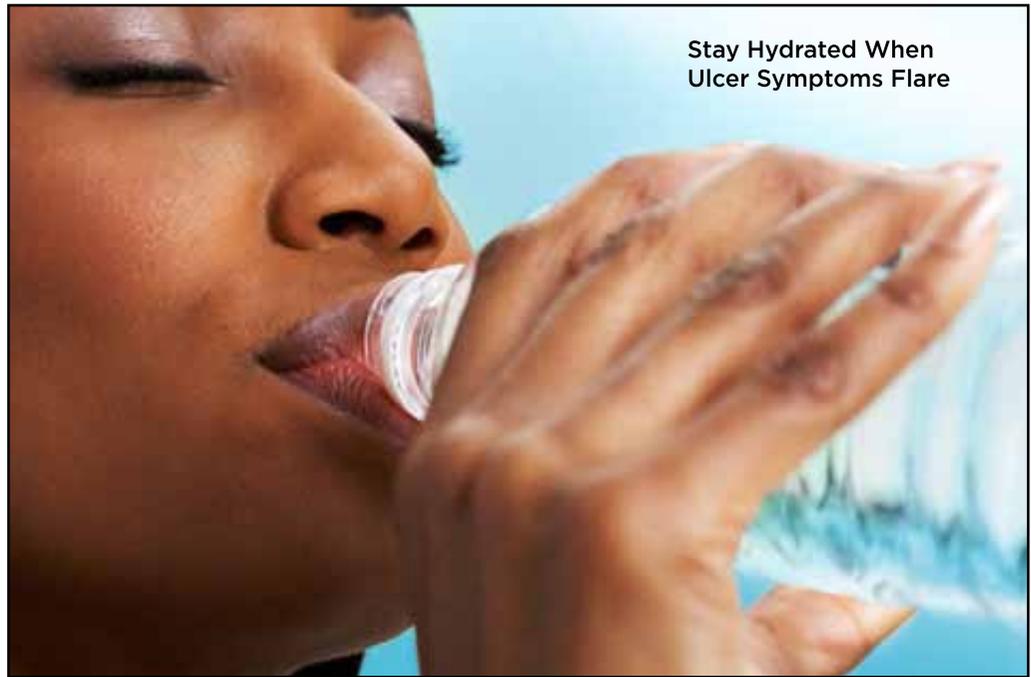
Maintaining a healthy lifestyle can prevent you from getting ulcers.

- Reduce stress and anxiety
- Stop smoking and alcoholism
- Follow regular diet habit
- Stop inappropriate use of pain killers
- Eat small quantities at frequent intervals.

How we can manage ulcers naturally?

Plenty of herbs and supplements found in nature can cure peptic ulcers

- **Cabbage juice:** Raw cabbage juice can heal an ulcer within 14 days. The high level of glutamine found in cabbage is responsible for its healing effect. Cabbage also contains phytonutrients capable of destroying H.pylori. Take 400 -500ml twice a day before meals.
- **Aloe Vera juice:** Aloe Vera is an excellent remedy to heal the ulcers in the stomach and also it helps for digestion. Take 2 teaspoon on an empty stomach everyday.
- **Siberian pine nut oil:** Take 1 teaspoon of Siberian pine nut oil in empty stomach, it can fight against the H. pylori bacteria and heal the ulcers.
- **Chamomile:** Chamomile is an anti-microbial herb, as well as nervous system relaxant. Prepare a very strong cup of Chamomile and drink at room temperature. Gently roll from side to side to ensure the entire stomach lining is in contact with the herb.
- **Licorice root:** Licorice promotes healing of gastric and duodenal ulcers. Take 750-1500 milligrams of deglyrrhizinted licorice three times daily between meals for 3 months. Licorice increases the number of mucous secreting cells and enhances the protective lining of the stomach.
- **Goldenseal:** Golden seal is anti-microbial, anti-inflammatory, anti-hemorrhagic and restorative to membrane fragility making it a superlative ulcer remedy.
- **Calendula:** Calendula is an excellent remedy for wounds and ulcers, if used internally it is equally efficacious in healing ulcerated mucous membranes.
- **Slippery elm:** It coats, soothes and heals gastric mucosa. Mix one tablespoon slippery elm bark with water until the mixture



Stay Hydrated When Ulcer Symptoms Flare

resembles a thick milk shake. Drink twice per day between meals.

- **Raw honey:** Take 1 teaspoon of raw honey in empty stomach. It can alleviate the symptoms of ulcers in stomach.
- **Foods:** Avoid cow's milk- Cow's milk stimulates the production of acid and can worsen the condition. Avoid coffee, alcohol, citrus juices, sugar, hot and spicy foods, these substances irritate the stomach and encourage the production of gastric acid. Take plenty of bananas which will increase the proliferation of lining of stomach. Also take high fiber and low in fat food. Eat steamed green vegetable like alfalfa, broccoli, and tomatoes.
- **Essential fatty acids (Omega 3)** can reduce inflammatory process. Take 5ml of flaxseed oil twice daily or take a combined Evening Primrose oil (EPO) and Fish oil capsule, 1000mg three times per day with meals.
- **Probiotics:** If you taking antibiotics for H.pylori, make sure to supplement with probiotics. This will replenish the intestinal flora with beneficial bacteria wiped out by antibiotics.
- **Vitamin K** prevents bleeding and promotes healing. Taking vitamin K, vitamin E, vitamin A, L Glutamine, chelated Zinc etc can also help if taken with professional advice.
- **Homoeopathic medicines** like condurango, symphytum, hydrastis etc can cure peptic ulcer if taken with the advice of a qualified homoeopath.

Anti ulcer Juice

INGREDIENTS:

1. Silver beet	-½ bunch
2. Carrots	-2
3. Cabbage head	-1/2
4. Broccoli sprouts	- few
5. Aloe Vera juice	-1/4 cup
6. Slippery Elm powder (optional)	- 1 spoon

Make a juice of first 4 ingredients, mix 400ml of juice with 30ml aloe vera juice and sip slowly twice a day before meals. For added healing, (optional) make one teaspoon slippery elm powder to a paste with a little purified water and stir into the juice.

While there are many natural treatments for stomach ulcers, one of the most important things that a person can do is to prevent them for occurring in future. Some of the items that should be avoided include: coffee, alcohol, smoking spicy foods, and foods containing large amounts of acid. After learned to monitor your diet more carefully, you will have less occurrences of stomach ulcers in the future.

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WHAT IS HAY FEVER?

What Are The Symptoms Of Hay Fever?



Hay fever (or hayfever), also known as allergic rhinitis, is a common condition that shows signs and symptoms similar to a cold with sneezing, congestion, runny nose and sinus pressures.

What Is Fever (Pyrexia)? What Causes Fever?

Fever is caused by an allergic response to airborne substances, such as pollen - unlike a cold which is caused by a virus. The time of year in which you get hay fever depends on what airborne substance you are allergic to.

The substance that causes an allergic reaction in hay fever is called an "allergen". For the majority of people, those who do not get hay fever, these substances are not allergens, because their immune system does not react to them. Despite its name, hay fever does not mean that the person is allergic to hay and has a fever. Hay is hardly ever an allergen, and hay fever does not cause fever.

Although hay fever and allergic rhinitis have the same meaning, most lay people refer to hay fever only when talking about an allergic reaction to pollen or airborne allergens from plants or fungi, and understand allergic rhinitis as an allergy to airborne particles, such as pollen, dust mites or pet dander which affect the nose, and maybe the eyes and sinuses as well.

The rest of this article focuses on hay fever caused by pollen and other airborne allergens that come from plants or fungi. Hay fever caused by pollen is also known

as pollinosis.

Some people are only mildly affected by hay fever and rarely reach a point where they decide to seek medical advice. However, for many, symptoms may be so severe and persistent that they are unable to carry out their daily tasks at home, work or at school properly - these people will require treatment.

Treatments may not get rid of the symptoms altogether, but they usually lessen them and make it easier to cope. As with other allergies, the symptoms are a result of your immune system mistaking a harmless substance as a harmful one, and releasing chemicals that cause the symptoms. It is estimated that about 20% of people in Western Europe and North America suffer from some degree of hay fever. Although hay fever can start affecting people at any age, it generally develops during childhood or perhaps early adulthood. The majority of hay fever sufferers find their symptoms become less severe as they get older.

What are the symptoms of hay fever?

Symptoms of hay fever may start at different times of year, it depends on what substance the patient is allergic to. If a person is allergic to a common pollen, then when the pollen count is higher his symptoms will be more severe. **Common symptoms include:**

- Sneezing
- Watery eyes
- Itchy throat
- Itchy nose
- Blocked/runny nose

Severe symptoms may include:

- Sweats
- Loss of smell and taste
- Facial pain caused by blocked sinuses
- Itchiness spreads from the throat, to the nose and ears

Sometimes hay fever symptoms can lead to:

- "Irritability"

What is Asthma?

Asthma may find that when hay fever symptoms emerge their wheezing and episodes of breathlessness become more severe. A significant number of people only have asthma symptoms when they have hay fever."

What are the causes of hay fever?

"Hay fever occurs when the immune system mistakes a harmless airborne substance as a threat. As your body thinks the substance is harmful it produces an antibody called immunoglobulin E to attack it. It then releases the chemical histamine which causes the symptoms. There are seasonal hay fever triggers which include pollen and spores that will only cause symptoms during certain months of the year. The following are some examples of hay fever triggers:"

- Tree pollen - these tend to affect people in the spring.
- Grass pollen - these tend to affect people later on in the spring and also in the summer.
- Weed pollen - these are more common during autumn (fall).
- Fungi and mold spores - these are more common when the weather is warm.

What are the risk factors for

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hay fever?

A risk factor is something that increases a person's chances of developing a disease or condition.

Below are some risk factors for hay fever:

- **Family history (inheritance, genetics)** - If you have a close family member who has/had hay fever, your risk of developing it yourself is higher. There is also a slightly higher risk if a close family member has any type of allergy.
- **Other allergies** - people with other allergies are more likely to suffer from hay fever as well."
- **Asthma** - a significant number of people with asthma also have hay fever."
- **Gender and age** - hay fever affects more young males than young females. Before adolescence, twice as many boys as girls have hay fever. However, after adolescence many boys outgrow it and slightly more girls than boys are affected."
- **Birth date** - people born during the high pollen season have a slightly higher risk of developing hay fever than other people."
- **Second-hand smoke** - infants and babies who are regularly exposed to cigarette smoke during their first years of life are more likely to develop hay fever than babies who aren't."
- **Being the first child** - a higher percentage of firstborn children eventually develop hay fever, compared to other people."
- **Babies from smaller families** - a higher proportion of babies with no siblings, or just one sibling develop hay fever later on compared to babies born to larger families."
- **Babies born to high income families** - babies born to families with a high standard of living have a higher risk of developing hay fever later on, compared to other babies."

Experts believe that the last three risk factors are linked to childhood infections. If a baby and/or small child has had fewer infections, there is a greater risk of autoimmune problems."

How is hay fever diagnosed?

Generally, doctors can make a diagnosis based on the symptoms, which are usually fairly obvious.

The doctor will also ask questions about the patient's personal and family medical history, and how signs and symptoms have been dealt with so far. A blood or skin test can be followed up to identify which substance(s) the patient is allergic to.

- **Skin test** - the skin is pricked with a minute amount of a known allergen (substance that some people are allergic to). The amount of IgE antibodies (immunoglobulin E) is measured. IgE antibodies are produced in high amounts if a person has an allergy to something."
- **Blood test** - the test simply measures the level of IgE antibody in the blood. If it is zero there is no sensitivity, whereas 6 indicates very high sensitivity.

What are the treatment

options for hay fever

"There is a vast array of OTC (over-the-counter) and prescription medications for treating hay fever symptoms. Some patients may find that a combination of two or three medications works much better than just one. It is important for parents to remember that some hay fever medications are just for adults. If you are not sure, talk to a qualified pharmacist, or ask your doctor. Medications include:

Antihistamine sprays or tablets - these are commonly available over the counter. The medication stops the release of the chemical histamine. They usually effectively relieve symptoms of runny nose, itching and sneezing. However, if your nose is blocked they don't work.

Newer antihistamines are less likely to cause drowsiness than older ones - but older ones are just as effective. Examples of OTC antihistamines include loratadine. Examples of prescription antihistamines include Fexofenadine.

Azelastine starts working very rapidly and can be used up to 8 times a day - however, it can cause drowsiness and leave a bad taste in the mouth after use."

"Eye Drops - these reduce itching and swelling in the eyes and are usually used alongside other medications. Eye drops containing cromoglycate are commonly used.

Nasal Corticosteroids - These sprays treat the inflammation caused by hay fever, and are a safe and very effective long-term treatment. Examples include fluticasone.

Most patients may have to wait about a week before experiencing any significant benefits. Some patients may notice an unpleasant smell or taste, and have nose irritation."

Oral corticosteroids - for very severe hay fever symptoms the doctor may prescribe prednisone in pill form.

Desensitization treatment (immunotherapy) - this treatment used to be more common in the UK, but is now very rarely used and is not used at all in the USA, because it can cause some very strong reactions. Increasing amounts of the allergen are introduced into the patient. This treatment is only done in very specialized centers for patients with severe symptoms."

Alternative therapies - some alternative therapies claim to treat hay fever effectively.

A study published in The Medical Journal of Australia carried out by researchers at the University of Melbourne, suggested that acupuncture is effective in the symptomatic treatment of persistent allergic rhinitis. (MJA 2007; 187 (6): 337-341).

It is important to remember that although some patients do report benefits from alternative therapies, a lot of information one reads in books and on the internet is anecdotal. For therapy to be convincing, it should undergo proper clinical tests

which are either compared to a placebo (dummy treatment) or some treatment known to be effective. Before undergoing any complementary/alternative therapy, check it out carefully."

Pregnancy - decongestants and birth defects - researchers at Boston University reported in the American Journal of Epidemiology that pregnant mothers who take over-the-counter decongestants during their first trimester may have a higher risk of giving birth to babies with rare defects in their digestive tract, ear and heart.

How to prevent hay fever

"There is not much you can do to prevent yourself from becoming allergic to pollen or allergens from plants or fungi. However, avoiding situations where your exposure might be high will help reduce the likelihood of an allergic reaction, or perhaps its severity. The following measures may be helpful:"

Be aware of the pollen count during your susceptible months. You can get information from the TV, radio, internet or daily newspapers. On humid and windy non-rainy days pollen counts tend to be higher. Pollen counts tend to be higher during the early evening.

Keep windows and doors shut when pollen is high. Avoid mowing the lawn altogether during your susceptible months.

Choose low pollen days for gardening. Keep away from grassy areas when pollen counts are high.

Regularly splash your eyes with cool water. It will soothe them and clear them of pollen.

If pollen counts are high and you come indoors, have a shower and change your clothes. Remember that wrap-around glasses protect your eyes from pollen getting through.

A hat helps prevent pollen from collecting in your hair and then sprinkling down onto your eyes and face.

When driving on a high count day or time of day keep windows closed. There are pollen filters for cars.

Do not have flowers inside your home. Keep your surfaces, floors, carpets as dust free as possible.

If you use a vacuum cleaner make sure it has a good filter."

Ask smokers not to let their smoke get near you. If you are a smoker, giving up will help reduce your symptoms.

Pets can bring in pollen from outside. Whenever a pet comes indoors on a high pollen count day, either wash it or smooth its fur down with a damp cloth. Sometimes pets can be a source of allergic rhinitis which makes your pollen allergy worse. Smear Vaseline around the inside edges of your nostrils - it helps stop pollen from getting through. If you know when your hay fever season starts, prepare yourself in advance. See your GP and ask him/her to develop a plan for you.

**Written by Joseph Nordqvist
Edited by Christian Nordqvist
Source: Medical News Today**

ADMINISTRATOR

PULMONARY EMBOLISM

What is a pulmonary embolism?

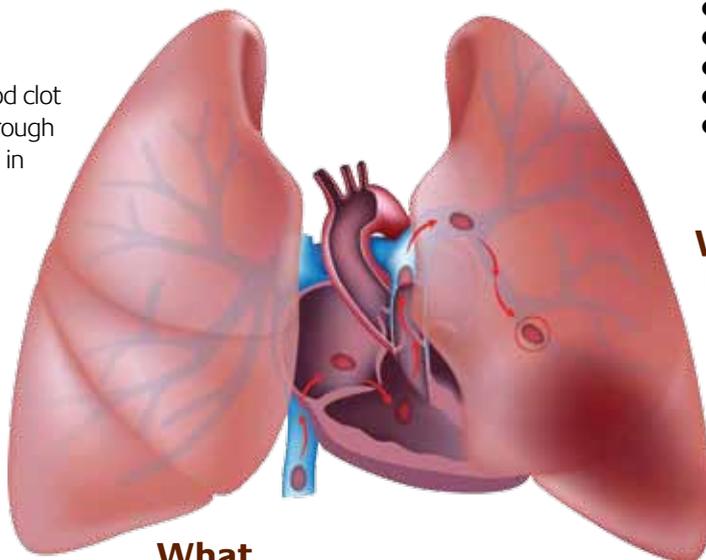
A pulmonary embolism is a blood clot that forms in a vein, travels through your bloodstream, and lodges in your lungs.

A pulmonary embolism is a medical emergency because a large embolism, or sometimes many repeated smaller ones, can be fatal in a short time. Normally, your blood flows from the right side of your heart to your lungs, where it picks up oxygen. The left side of your heart then pumps this oxygen-rich blood through a system of blood vessels called arteries.

Once your blood has delivered the oxygen to various parts of your body, it enters another network of blood vessels called the veins. Your veins carry the now oxygen-poor blood back to your heart, which pumps your blood to your lungs to pick up oxygen again. If a blood clot forms in a vein, commonly a deep vein in your leg, it can move with the blood flow back to your lungs and lodge there. This blood clot is called a pulmonary embolism. If your lung arteries become blocked by a blood clot, you may experience high blood pressure in your lungs. As a result, your heart pumps harder than usual. When your heart is continually overworked, it may enlarge, and it may eventually fail to perform.

A large pulmonary embolism can cause your lungs and heart to fail. Fortunately, your chances of surviving a pulmonary embolism increase when your physician can diagnose and treat your condition quickly.

"A LARGE PULMONARY EMBOLISM CAN CAUSE YOUR LUNGS AND HEART TO FAIL."



What are the symptoms?

The symptoms you feel can depend on the location and size of your blood clot. Shortness of breath is the most common symptom. Other symptoms include rapid breathing; anxiety and restlessness; chest pain, which might extend into your shoulder, arm, neck, and jaw; coughing or spitting up blood; feeling lightheaded or fainting; and having a rapid heartbeat.

What causes a pulmonary embolism?

The type of clot that is likely to cause a pulmonary embolism usually originates in the veins deep in your muscles. This condition is called **deep vein thrombosis (DVT)**. DVT usually occurs in your leg or pelvic veins; although less commonly it can also sometimes occur in your arm veins.

Factors that increase the risk of DVT or pulmonary embolism include:

- Having a close family member who has had a pulmonary embolism
- Inherited blood clotting abnormalities
- Major surgery
- Hip or leg fractures
- Standing or sitting still for long periods of time, such as on a long plane trip or car ride

- Cancer
- Obesity
- Smoking
- Having a history of a heart attack or stroke
- Pregnancy, taking birth control pills, or taking estrogen replacement therapy

What tests will I need?

First your physician asks you questions about your general health, medical history, and symptoms. In addition, your physician conducts a physical exam. Together these are known as a patient history and exam. To confirm the diagnosis of pulmonary embolism, the physician may order specific tests, which may include some of the following:

- Chest x-ray
- Electrocardiography (ECG) which measures your heart's electrical activity
- D-dimer enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay, a blood test that shows an increase of a type of protein that may rise after a pulmonary embolism
- Lung scanning, which measures blood flow in your lungs and your air intake
- Spiral computed tomography (CT) scan
- Pulmonary angiography, which shows x-ray pictures of the blood vessels in your lungs
- Duplex ultrasound, which allows your physician to measure the speed of blood flow and to see the structure of your leg veins
- Venography, which shows x-ray pictures of your leg veins

How is a pulmonary embolism treated?

If you have a pulmonary embolism, your physician or vascular surgeon may administer an anticoagulant drug called heparin intravenously as initial treatment. Anticoagulants are sometimes called blood thinners.

They don't literally thin your blood, but they help prevent your blood from clotting too easily. Heparin helps prevent clots from forming and keeps clots you already have from growing. Eventually, your body breaks up the clot that has caused your pulmonary embolism.

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Alternatively, a type of medication, called fractionated heparin, may be delivered once or twice daily through an injection in your abdomen. This functions in a very similar fashion to heparin delivered directly into the vein.

If you have a large pulmonary embolism, or you have another medical condition, your physician or vascular surgeon may recommend more aggressive treatments.

A treatment called **thrombolysis** can dissolve your clot. In this procedure, your vascular surgeon injects clot-dissolving drugs through a catheter directly into the clot.

A **catheter** is a long, thin tube that your vascular surgeon inserts into a puncture in the skin over a blood vessel.

Thrombolysis has a higher risk for bleeding complications and stroke than anticoagulant therapy but may be effective more quickly, a feature that may be important if the pulmonary embolism is large. In you are unable to receive anticoagulant therapy or thrombolysis, your vascular surgeon may attempt to remove the clot using a catheter technique.

Using this technique, called suction **thrombectomy**, your physician guides a catheter through your blood vessels to your pulmonary embolism. The catheter shoots a salt solution into the

blocked artery. The water pressure pulls the clot toward the tip of the catheter and breaks up the clot. Your vascular surgeon may, as another option, use a catheter attached to a mechanical device such as a rotating head to break up a clot.

Rarely, physicians recommend surgery for a pulmonary embolism. The procedure is called **pulmonary embolectomy**. You may need this surgery if you have life-threatening blockages in your lungs that are not responsive to other treatments. Your vascular surgeon will advise you regarding the best treatment option for your particular situation.

Once your pulmonary embolism has been treated, you will usually need to take an anticoagulant drug called **warfarin (Coumadin®)** for six months or longer to lessen the risk of developing another pulmonary embolism.

During the time you are taking medication, your physician will order blood tests to make sure your blood anticoagulation level is adequate to prevent clots but not so high as to cause excessive bleeding.

Anticoagulants can cause bleeding problems if the dosage is too high so it is important to follow your physician's recommendations for testing and dose adjustments.

In some circumstances, your physician may recommend placement of a special metal filter in your main vein, the vena cava, if drug therapy isn't feasible or isn't enough to prevent pulmonary embolisms from recurring. This device is

called a vena cava filter.

The vena cava is a large vein in your abdomen that carries blood back to your heart and lungs. Vena cava filters can trap the clots that break away from your leg veins before they can reach your lungs. Your vascular surgeon inserts the filter into your vena cava through a catheter.

Some of these filters are left in place permanently and some can be removed. Your vascular surgeon will advise you regarding what is the best option for your particular situation.

What can I do to stay healthy?

Your physician can recommend ways to prevent pulmonary embolisms in the future. These actions include:

- Wearing elastic compression stockings, which prevent blood from pooling in your veins
- Being fitted with a sleeve-like device on your legs during surgery. This device compresses your legs regularly to help blood keep flowing through your veins until you can walk again
- Walking or flexing your legs every hour on long plane or car trips. You should also drink plenty of fluids when traveling, because dehydration can increase your blood's tendency to clot
- Preventive use of anticoagulants during times when you have limited mobility, like during surgery or prolonged bed rest, when the circumstances permit

Source: <https://www.vascularweb.org/vascularhealth/Pages/pulmonary-embolism.aspx>

PILES (HAEMORRHOIDS)

KEY POINTS

Piles is a condition in which the veins in or around your anal canal become swollen. The condition can develop at any age but is more common as you get older and during pregnancy.

Symptoms include **rectal bleeding** and **pain, swelling** and **itching around your anus**. Reduce your risk of piles by eating a diet that is high in fibre and drinking enough non-caffeinated, non-alcoholic fluid.

Piles, also known as **haemorrhoids**, are **swollen and inflamed veins around your anus or in your anal canal**.

About piles

Piles are round swellings on the inside of or just outside your anal canal. The anal canal is the short, muscular tube that connects your rectum

(back passage) with your anus. Piles develop in areas known as the haemorrhoidal cushions, which can become swollen, often as a result of straining when you go to the toilet.

You can get piles at any age, but they are most common in people aged between 45 and 65. It's difficult to know exactly how many people get piles, but in the UK the condition is thought to affect between four and 25 people in every 100. Piles aren't cancerous and you can't catch them from someone else.

Piles are common during pregnancy. They develop as a result of changes in the hormones (chemicals) in your body and the increased pressure in your abdomen (tummy). They usually get better once your baby is born.

Types of piles

Internal piles develop inside your anal canal, but they can hang down outside your anus. Internal piles can be graded according to how far they protrude, if at all, from your anus.

FIRST DEGREE piles are swellings on the inside lining of your anal canal. They may bleed but can't be seen from outside your anus.

SECOND DEGREE piles are larger than first degree piles. They come out of your anus when you have a bowel movement, but go back inside on their own afterwards.

THIRD DEGREE piles hang down from your anus and only go back inside when you push them in.

FOURTH DEGREE piles permanently hang down from your anus and you can't push them back in.

They may become very swollen and painful if the blood inside them clots.

External piles are swellings that develop further down your anal canal, closer to your anus. They can be more painful than internal types of piles.

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PILES (HAEMORRHOIDS)

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Symptoms of piles

- Common symptoms of piles include:
- Bleeding from your anus – you may only see this as bright, red blood on toilet paper
- A lump in or around your anus
- A slimy discharge of mucus
- A feeling that your bowels haven't emptied completely
- Itchy skin around your anus
- Swelling around your anus
- Pain and discomfort after a bowel movement (if you have external piles)
- These symptoms may be caused by problems other than piles. If you have any of these symptoms, see your GP for advice.

Causes of piles

Piles develop when the veins in your anal canal become swollen. This can happen for a number of reasons, including:

- Increased pressure in your abdomen, for example as a result of pregnancy
- Straining to empty your bowels, for example if you have constipation
- Ageing – as you get older you may be more likely to get piles because the support structures in your rectum weaken
- Not eating enough **HYPERLINK "<http://www.bupa.co.uk/individuals/health-information/directory/f/fibre>" fibre**
- Frequently lifting heavy objects
- Having a weakness in your rectum
- Having a family history of piles
- It isn't true that you can get piles by sitting on cold, hard surfaces.

Diagnosis of piles

Your GP will ask about your symptoms and examine you. He or she is likely to examine your rectum by gently inserting a gloved finger into your anus. Your GP may also use a proctoscope to look inside your rectum. A proctoscope is a short, narrow, tube-like instrument with a light source. Air can be blown through the tube to open up your bowel so it can be seen more clearly. This test should not be painful but it

may be uncomfortable and make you feel as though you want to have a bowel movement. Depending on the results of these tests, your GP may refer you to hospital to have a flexible sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy to examine your large bowel. This can help to rule out other conditions.

Treatment of piles

Piles are often mild and get better with simple lifestyle changes. There are a number of things that you can do to help to relieve the symptoms.

Self-help

Diet and lifestyle changes can often help to relieve your symptoms. For example, eating a high-fibre diet will make your stools softer and easier to pass. This is important for reducing the increased pressure on the veins in your anus caused by straining when you have a bowel movement. Drink enough fluids to keep hydrated and don't have too much caffeine. Try not to strain when you're passing a bowel movement and gently clean around your anus with baby wipes afterwards. Regular warm baths may relieve any irritation and help to keep your anal area clean. See our frequently asked questions for more information.

Medicines

If you still have symptoms after about seven to 10 days despite using self-help measures, you may wish to consider taking a medicine or seeing your GP for advice. There are a range of medicines that can help relieve the symptoms of piles. If you're passing hard or infrequent faeces, a fibre supplement such as ispaghula husk (eg Fybogel) or mild laxatives such as lactulose, will soften your faeces. Don't use laxatives that stimulate your bowel, such as senna, unless your GP advises you to. Over-the-counter painkillers, such as paracetamol or ibuprofen, may help to ease any pain you have. Soothing creams, ointments and suppositories may ease any pain and itchiness. There are many different products available over the counter. Some contain a local anaesthetic such as lidocaine. Products containing corticosteroids, such as Anugesic-HC and Proctosedyl, may reduce inflammation and pain. Don't use these for more than a week as they can damage the skin around your anus. These are generally only available on prescription.

Always read the patient information leaflet that comes with your medicine and if you have any

questions, ask your GP or pharmacist for advice. See our frequently asked questions for more information.

It's important to be aware that it can take several weeks for some of these medicines to have an effect. If after this time your symptoms haven't improved and are troublesome, or your haemorrhoids are severe, your GP may refer you to see a specialist for treatment.

Non-surgical treatments

There are certain treatments that you will need to go into hospital for, but you won't have to stay overnight. These include the following. **Banding.** This involves placing a small elastic band around the pile, which cuts off the blood supply and causes it to die and fall off after a few days. The area left behind will heal up naturally. **Sclerotherapy.** This involves having your piles injected with an oily solution, which makes them shrivel up. **Infra red coagulation or laser treatment.** This uses infra red light to seal the veins above the pile, which causes it to shrink. **Bipolar diathermy and direct current electrotherapy treatment.** This uses an electrical current to burn off the pile.

Surgery

Surgical treatments for piles are an option if you have severe piles and other treatments haven't worked. There are different types of surgery, including haemorrhoidectomy or stapled haemorrhoidopexy. The type that is recommended for you will depend on the size and number of piles you have.

Prevention of piles

If you have daily bowel movements that are solid but soft and you don't need to strain, faeces will pass easily and won't put pressure on the veins in your anal area. This can help to prevent piles. The following lifestyle measures can help to keep your bowel movements soft and prevent constipation, and therefore piles. Eat plenty of fibre-rich foods such as fruit, vegetables, bran and wholegrain cereals (for example, brown rice, wholemeal bread and wholemeal pasta). Aim to eat 25 to 30g of fibre a day – as a guide, a slice of wholemeal bread contains 2 to 3g and a medium-sized apple has about 3.5g. Drink plenty of fluids (about six to eight glasses a day of non-caffeinated, non-alcoholic drinks).

Reviewed by Polly Kerr, Bupa Health Information Team, June 2013.

OBESITY IN CHILDREN

Children have fewer weight-related health and medical problems than adults. However, overweight children are at high risk of becoming overweight adolescents and adults, placing them at risk of developing chronic diseases such as diabetes later in life. They are also more prone to develop stress, sadness, and low self-esteem.

What Causes Obesity in Children?

Children become overweight and obese for a variety of reasons. The most common causes are genetic factors, lack of physical activity, unhealthy eating patterns, or a combination of these factors. Only in rare cases is being overweight caused by a medical condition such as a hormonal problem. Physical exam and some blood tests can rule out the possibility of a medical condition as the cause for obesity. Although weight problems run in families, not all children with a family history of obesity will be overweight. Children whose parents or brothers or sisters are overweight may be at an increased risk of becoming overweight themselves, but this can be linked to shared family behaviors such as eating and activity habits.

A child's total diet and activity level play an important role in determining a child's weight. Today, many children spend a lot of time being inactive. For example, the average child spends



approximately four hours each day watching television. As computers and video games become increasingly popular, the number of hours of inactivity may increase.

What Diseases Are Obese Children at Risk For?

Obese children are at risk for a number of conditions, including:

- High cholesterol
- High blood pressure
- Early heart disease
- Diabetes
- Bone problems
- Skin conditions such as heat rash, fungal infections, and acne

How Do I Know if My Child Is Overweight?

The best person to determine whether or not your child is overweight is your child's doctor. In determining whether or not your child is overweight, the doctor will measure your child's weight and height and compute his "BMI," or body mass index, to compare this value to standard values. The doctor will also consider your child's age and growth patterns. Assessing obesity in children can be difficult, because children can grow in unpredictable spurts.

How Can I Help My Overweight Child?

If you have an overweight child, it is very important that you allow him or her to know that you will be supportive. Children's feelings about themselves often are based on their parents' feelings about them, and if you accept your children at any weight, they will be more likely to feel good about themselves. It is also important to talk to your children about their weight, allowing them to share their concerns with you. It is not recommended that parents set children apart because of their weight. Instead, parents should focus on gradually changing their family's physical activity and eating habits. By involving the entire family, everyone is taught healthful habits and the overweight child does not feel singled out.

Source: <http://www.webmd.com/children/guide/obesity-children>

HEALTHY SNACKS FOR KIDS: 10 CHILD-FRIENDLY TIPS

Healthy snacks for kids don't have to be dull. Consider 10 tips for quick-and-healthy snacks. Snacking is a major pastime for many kids — and that's not necessarily bad. Nutritious snacking can help your child curb hunger throughout the day, as well as provide energy and important nutrients. Find out how to make healthy snacks for kids.

No. 1: Keep junk food out of the house
Your child won't clamor for cookies, candy bars or chips if you don't keep them on hand. Set a good example by choosing healthy snacks yourself.

No. 2: Go for the grain
Whole-grain foods — such as whole-grain pretzels or tortillas and high-fiber, whole-grain cereals — provide energy with some staying power.

No. 3: Mix and match
Serve baby carrots or other raw veggies with fat-free ranch dressing or hummus. Dip graham

cracker sticks or fresh fruit in fat-free yogurt. Spread peanut butter on celery, apples or bananas.

No. 4: Broaden the menu
Offer out-of-the-usual fare, such as pineapple, cranberries, red or yellow peppers, mangoes, tangelos or roasted soy nuts.

No. 5: Revisit breakfast
Serve breakfast foods — such as scrambled eggs and whole-grain toast — as healthy snacks for kids in the afternoon.

No. 6: Sweeten it up
Healthy snacks for kids don't have to be bland. To satisfy your child's sweet tooth, offer fat-free pudding, frozen yogurt or frozen fruit bars. Make smoothies with skim milk, fat-free yogurt, and fresh or frozen fruit.

No. 7: Have fun
Use a cookie cutter to make shapes out of low-fat cheese slices, whole-grain bread or whole-grain tortillas. Make fruit kebabs or show your child how to eat diced fruit with chopsticks. Make a tower out of whole-grain crackers, spell words with pretzel sticks, or make funny faces on a plate using dif-

ferent types of fruit.

No. 8: Promote independence
Keep a selection of ready-to-eat veggies in the refrigerator. Leave fresh fruit in a bowl on the counter. Store low-sugar, whole-grain cereal and fruit canned or packaged in its own juice in an easily accessible cabinet.

No. 9: Don't be fooled by labeling gimmicks
Foods marketed as low-fat or fat-free can still be high in calories and sodium. Likewise, foods touted as cholesterol-free can still be high in fat, saturated fat and sugar. Check nutrition labels to find out the whole story.

No. 10: Designate a snacking zone
Restrict snacking to certain areas, such as the kitchen. You'll save your child countless calories from mindless munching in front of the TV. If your child needs to snack on the go, offer string cheese, yogurt sticks, cereal bars, a banana or other drip-free items. Teaching your child to make healthy snack choices now will help set the stage for a lifetime of healthy eating. Start today!

NATURAL SOLUTIONS TO GOUT

Gout known as "the disease of kings" or "rich man's disease" is a kind of arthritis affecting the joints usually big toes, can also affect other joints gradually which is expressed as pain and swelling in joints.

How Gout happens?

Gout is caused by increased level of uric acid in blood. It is due to either increased production in the body or under excretion of uric acid by the kidneys. These excess uric acid crystallizes and accumulates in joints and causes gout.

Who Gets Gout?

Men in their 40s and 50s are at greatest risk. Women have the good fortune of being more efficient in the way they excrete uric acid. And children rarely get it. Up to 18 percent of all people with gout have family members with gout. Overweight. Excessive eating steps up the production of uric acid. Eating too many foods with purines, such as organ meats (liver, kidney, brains, sweetbreads), red meat, sardines, anchovies, meat extracts, dried peas, lentils, and legumes etc. Heavy alcohol use. With respect to risks related to alcohol, beer and spirits appear to have a greater risk than wine. Using certain medications, including diuretics, salicylates, levodopa, niacin, aspirin etc can lead to gout.

What are the symptoms of gout?

You can go to bed feeling fine and wake up by a severe pain in the great toe, heel, ankle or instep. You may also experience joint swelling and shiny red or purple skin around the joint. There will be chills and shivers, and a little fever often. The night is passed in torture, sleeplessness, turning the part affected, and perpetual change of posture. The joint at the base of the big toe is the



Inflamed gout toe

most commonly affected (in 50% of cases). The attacks can last a few days or many weeks before the pain goes away. Another attack may not happen for months or years.

How diagnosis is made?

The gout can be easily diagnosed from its presentation itself and location of great toe, but should be differentiated from other types of arthritis like osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis etc. The important diagnostic test for gout is testing the uric acid level in blood. The normal level of uric acid in blood is 3.5 -7.2 mg/dL in males and 3-6 mg/dL in females and if it is higher, we can suspect chances of gout. The synovial fluid from the joint is taken and checked for uric acid crystals to confirm gout. X- rays of the joint can also reveal the gout concretion in your joints.

See your doctor even if your pain from gout is gone. Your doctor will ask questions about your symptoms and do a physical exam. He may also take a sample of fluid from your joint to look for uric acid crystals. Your doctor may also do a blood test to measure the amount of uric acid in your blood.

How to manage gout in natural way?

1. Apple Cider Vinegar

Apple cider vinegar is very helpful in relieving acute gout attacks. Mix one teaspoon of apple cider vinegar in a glass of water or two table spoon of honey and drink it 2-3 times daily. If you find this remedy helpful, you can increase the dosage of apple cider vinegar to up to two

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tablespoons. Always use organic vinegar with the mother intact.

2. Baking Soda

Baking soda can help lower the amount of uric acid, can help to relieve the pain.

Mix one-half teaspoon of baking soda in a glass of water and drink 2-3 times a day for about 2 weeks. The maximum recommended dose is 4 teaspoons divided up throughout the day during an acute attack. Reduce the dose as the pain subsides.

If you are above 60 years, do not take more than 3 times in a day. Baking soda can raise the blood pressure. So avoid this if you have blood pressure or consult a health care practitioner before you use this.

3. Lemon Juice

Mix the juice of half a lemon to a glass of water and drink it 3 times a day.

Another alkalizing drink is a lemon juice and baking soda cocktail. Mixing the highly acidic lemon juice with the highly alkaline baking soda creates a perfectly balanced pH that matches the body's natural healthy pH, which helps to restore balance almost instantaneously. Pour the juice of one lemon into a glass. Add 1/2 teaspoon of baking soda and allow it to fizz and bubble until it is completely flat. Then add 8 oz. of water and drink immediately. It should taste like flat water.

4. Cherries

Eat 15 to 20 cherries a day. It is best to eat fresh cherries, but if they are not available at the market, you can opt for canned cherries.

Another option is to drink a glass of cherry juice enriched with a few cloves of minced garlic daily. Natural tablets and syrups of cherry are available in health shops now a day.



Gout finger

5. Epsom Salt

Epsom salt is very useful for gout and other forms of arthritis. The high amount of magnesium present in Epsom salt will also improve the condition of your heart and lower high blood pressure. Soaking the affected foot in warm tub of Epsom salt can relieve pains of gout. Take a bath in Epsom salt soaked warm water once a week, it can help to reduce the symptoms of gout.

6. Ginger Root

Mix equal amounts of fenugreek powder, turmeric powder and dried ginger root powder. Take one teaspoon of this

mixture along with warm water twice daily.

Add ginger root in cooking recipes, or eat a small, raw piece of ginger root daily.

Add one-half teaspoon of ginger root to one cup of boiling water and drink this solution at least once daily.

Make a paste of ginger root with a little water and apply this paste on the affected area and leave it on for about half an hour. Do this once daily.

7. Fruits

Eat plenty of bananas, apples and citrus fruits. The high potassium content in bananas,

malic acid in applies, and vitamin C in citrus fruits helps to neutralize the uric acid and reduce the

levels. Increased water intake helps almost every diseases like gout, high blood pressure, kidney problems etc.

9. Homoeopathic Medicines

There are plenty of homoeopathic medicines like arnica, belladonna, rhus tox, acid benz, ruta etc to reduce the uric acid levels in blood and relieve the symptoms of gout, which should be used with the advice of a homeopathic physician. Both lifestyle changes and medications can decrease uric acid levels. Dietary and lifestyle choices that are effective against gout include reducing intake of meat and seafoods rich in purines, limiting alcohol, avoiding obesity, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Remember always - "Prevention is better than cure...!"

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Ginger Root

8. Water

Drink at least 8-10 glasses of water per day in order to flush all the toxins and dilute uric acid

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