

Review Article

Homeopathic Approach to Gastritis: A Review

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ABSTRACT

Gastritis represent a state of inflammation, irritation or erosion of stomach lining which may occur suddenly (acute) or gradually (chronic). Generally there is no universally accepted classification of gastritis and early classification was based mainly on the Morphology, but recently pathogenic mechanisms have also been incorporated. A lifelong and aggressive inflammation in gastritis results in the destruction (atrophic gastritis) of stomach mucosa with time (years and decades). The progressive worsening of atrophic gastritis subsequently in dysfunction of stomach mucosa. Atrophic gastritis will finally end up in permanently acid free stomach are the highest independent risk conditions for gastric cancer know so far.

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INTRODUCTION:

The membranes lining the stomach wall protect it from acid and germs. If this protective lining irritated or damaged, it can become inflamed. Long lasting inflammations can further damage the stomach lining and lead to stomach (gastric) ulcers.

Inflammation of the stomach lining is called gastritis. Its usually caused by certain bacteria or the regular use of anti – inflammatory painkillers .There are two kinds of gastritis: Acute and Chronic.

Acute gastritis is typically accompanied by very noticeable stomach and bowel problems that usually go away again on their own after a few days. Chronic gastritis on the other hand may go unnoticed. Sometimes it's not discovered until stomach ulcers have developed which then cause noticeable symptoms.

Symptoms:

The symptoms of acute gastritis include the following :

- . Stomach pain
- . Feeling full
- . Heart burn
- . Nausea and sometimes vomitings
- . Belching
- . Lack of appetite
- . A bloated stomach

Some of these symptoms may also be signs of other conditions like gastro-esophageal reflux disease (GERD) on irritable stomach or bowel and tummy bugs (gastroenteritis). People with chronic gastritis often only have mild symptoms or none at all. But they may have symptoms like those associated with acute gastritis.

Causes:

Commen causes of gastritis include an infection with Helicobacter pylori bacteria and taking anti-inflammatory painkillers known as NSAIDs.

Helicobacter pylori bacteria:

H-pylori bacteria upset the balance of stomach acid production. As a result too much acid is made. This can damage the lining and wall of the stomach. But Helicobacter infections only rarely lead to gastritis. The bacteria can be spread through saliva (spit), vomit, stool, drinking water or food. It is thought that most people already become infected in childhood .through close contact with family members.

Nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) :

This group of drugs includes acetylsalicylic acid (the drug in medicines like Aspirin) , Diclofenac , ibuprofen and naproxen . Side effects are rare when these painkillers are taken for only a short time to treat acute pain. But if

they are used for longer time – such as several weeks or months – they may affect the protective function of the stomach lining because they block the production of the hormone prostaglandin which regulates the production of gastric (stomach) mucus and substances that neutralize stomach acid. If there's not enough prostaglandin, the stomach wall no longer has enough protection against stomach acid.

Combining painkillers with steroids can make damaging effect worse.

Other causes:

Smoking, long term stress and certain kinds of foods (like fatty, sugary or spicy dishes) may also cause stomach problems. Drinking too much alcohol can lead to acute gastritis too.

Another Less common cause of gastritis is a condition called bile reflux. This is where bile flows upward out of the small intestine and into the stomach, where it damages the lining.

Prevalence:

Gastritis is common in Germany. It is estimated that 20 out of 100 people have acute gastritis at some point in their lives. Most women get gastritis between the ages of 45 and 64 and most men develop it over the age of 65. The risk of gastritis generally increases with age.

Effects:

If the lining of the stomach or bowel no longer provide enough protection. Their walls may become inflamed or damaged just after the stomach. Gastric (stomach) ulcers and duodenal ulcers can lead to serious complication like bleeding.

If gastritis becomes chronic and the membrane lining is always inflamed. You might become anaemic too. Cancerous tumors may develop, but that is very rare.

Diagnosis:

To find out what is causing the symptoms the doctor will first feel the stomach and upper abdomen area. Depending on the type of symptoms your stomach might also be examined from the inside to find out more. This examination takes five to ten minutes. It is done with an instrument called a Gastroscope. Doctors can use the gastroscop camera to look at the walls of your food pipe (oesophagus), stomach and duodenum. In this way they can find changes such as inflammation or bleeding in the stomach lining. They can also use the gastroscop to take some tissues from the lining and then have the sample checked for Helicobacter pylori bacteria or cell changes such as cancer.

Sometimes a special breath test is done to

confirm the presence of a Helicobacter pylori infection. These bacteria can also be detected using a blood test or stool test.

Homeopathic Management:

Homeopathy has holistic approach. Gastritis is related to stress where homeopathy plays a very good role in managing it. It will also help to reduce the nausea, burning, belching and symptoms associated with the illness. Homeopathic medicines work safely and surely in preventing recurrence at the same time getting rid of the problem without causing any side effects.

1. **ArsenicumAlbum:** It is the best homeopathic medicine for gastritis. It works well when there is burning pain in the stomach due to gastritis. Ingesting even a little food or drink worsens the pain. Taking something warm may bring relief. Acidic and cold things worsen the pain and burning. Other accompanying symptoms are weakness, exhaustion, weight loss, and intense anxiety.

2. **Argentum Nitricum:** It helps persons suffering from gastritis caused by chronic alcohol intake. A primary symptom for using Argentum Nitricum is a pain in the stomach which radiates to all parts of the abdomen. The pain may be gnawing, burning or constricting in nature. Another symptom is frequent belching. Distension of the abdomen may also occur.

3. **Phosphorus:** Gastritis accompanied by nausea and vomiting, is the main symptom for the use of phosphorus. In such cases, the patient throws up food by the mouthful. There is constant nausea and soreness in the pit of stomach. Water brash and heartburn are other features that may arise. Some patients also complain of bitter or sour belching.

4. **Lycopodium:** It is used in case where fullness of the abdomen is a leading symptom. Eating tiny quantities of food can also lead to fullness and distension of the stomach. Along with fullness, there is gnawing, burning or constrictive pain in the stomach. The pain may get better on rubbing. Nausea and sour belching may also be present. In few cases, there is vomiting of food and bile. Another marked feature is the loss of appetite.

5. **Bismuth:** It works well in cases of gastritis where cold drinks bring relief to the symptoms. The burning in the stomach is relieved by drinking something cold. There is pain in the area around the stomach. Bending backward brings a little relief to the pain. Along with the pain, there is sensation of pressure and heavy load on the stomach.

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