

# **Ulcer in the Upper Intestine (Duodenal Ulcer): Brief Version**

## **What is an ulcer in the upper intestine?**

An ulcer is a raw place or sore in the lining of the stomach or intestine. When it happens in the upper part of the intestine, it is called a duodenal ulcer. It may also be called a peptic ulcer.

## **How does it happen?**

The lining of the intestine normally protects the intestine. It keeps it from being hurt by stomach acid. If the lining breaks down, stomach acids can damage the intestine. This can cause an ulcer. It may happen because:

- You have an infection by bacteria called *H. pylori*. These bacteria cause most ulcers.
- You are taking aspirin, ibuprofen, or naproxen. These medicines can irritate the intestine.
- Your stomach makes too much acid.

Cigarettes and alcohol may make an ulcer worse. They may keep the ulcer from healing.

## **What are the symptoms?**

You may have:

- A burning pain in your upper belly
- Pain that gets worse when your stomach is empty
- Pain that goes away after you eat
- Pain that wakes you up during the night
- Weight loss

If the ulcer bleeds:

- You may vomit and see blood in your vomit. You may see bright red blood. Or the blood may look like coffee grounds.
- Your bowel movements may be black or have bright red blood in them.

## **How is it treated?**

It's important to treat an ulcer. Your healthcare provider may prescribe:

- Antibiotics to treat *H. pylori* bacteria
- Medicine to lower the acid in your stomach
- Medicine to coat and protect the lining of your stomach and intestine

Sometimes you may need to stay in the hospital for the first part of your treatment.

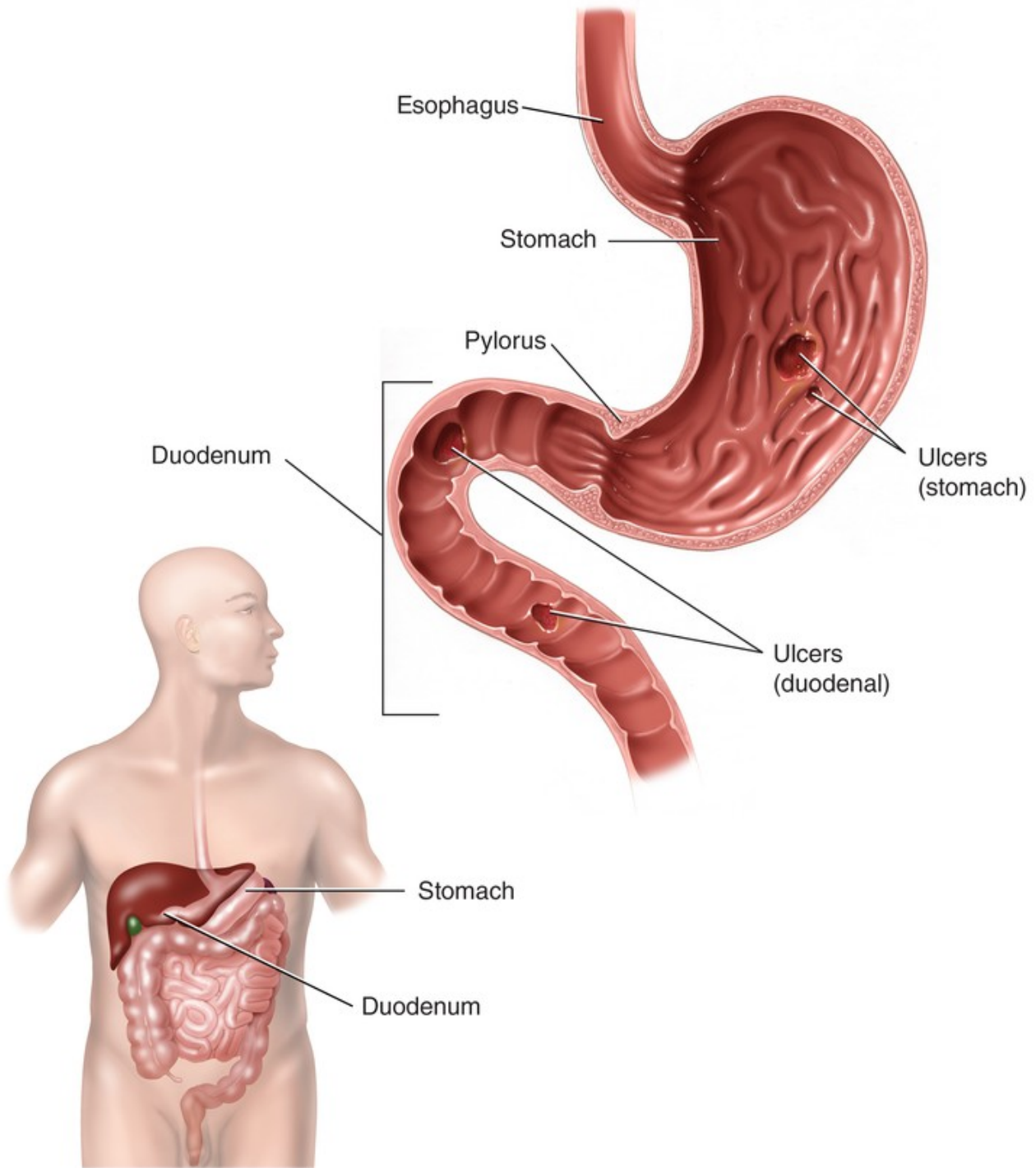
## How can I take care of myself?

- Take all of the medicine prescribed by your healthcare provider.
- Keep all appointments with your provider.
- Eat the diet recommended by your provider.
- Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and chewing tobacco. These substances can make it harder for ulcers to heal. Talk to your provider if you need help stopping alcohol or tobacco.
- Ask your provider if you need to stop taking some medicines, like aspirin or ibuprofen.
- Ask your provider what symptoms or problems you should watch for. Ask what you should do if you have them.

Developed by RelayHealth.

*This content is reviewed periodically and is subject to change as new health information becomes available. The information is intended to inform and educate and is not a replacement for medical evaluation, advice, diagnosis or treatment by a healthcare professional.*

# Stomach and Duodenal Ulcer



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