



## Nutrition and Peptic Ulcers

### What is a peptic ulcer?

A peptic ulcer is an open sore that is found inside the stomach or the upper part of the small intestine. A peptic ulcer in the stomach may be called a gastric ulcer. A peptic ulcer in the upper part of the small intestine (i.e. the duodenum) may be called a duodenal ulcer.

### Peptic Ulcer Causes

Two common causes of peptic ulcers include changes in the balance of stomach acid triggered by *Helicobacter Pylori* (H. Pylori) infection or the use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs).

### Can Diet Help?

The following peptic ulcer diet guidelines may help reduce peptic ulcer symptoms, such as a pain and discomfort. Some of the guidelines may also help reduce the risk of developing a peptic ulcer.

### Peptic Ulcer Diet Guidelines

1. Limit or avoid foods that cause a large increase in stomach acid. Too much stomach acid can irritate an ulcer, which can cause pain or discomfort. These foods include:
  - alcohol
  - regular and decaffeinated coffee
  - other liquids such as strong tea or soft drinks.
2. Limit or avoid intake of foods that may directly irritate the ulcer:
  - Black pepper, red pepper and chili pepper
  - Other highly seasoned foods.

Note: Many spices may be well tolerated, therefore you only need to limit or avoid those that cause pain or discomfort.



3. Good nutrition is key to helping ulcers heal.
  - i. Aim to select foods from all 4 food groups so that your meals are well balanced.
  - ii. Try to make sure you are including a variety of fruits and vegetables throughout the day.
  - iii. It may also help to limit high fat foods (e.g. full fat dairy products, muffins, croissants or fried meats)
  
4. Timing of meals can help reduce symptoms.
  - i. For duodenal ulcers, use a meal and snack pattern that reduces symptoms. For example, eating more often throughout the day (i.e. 3 meals and 3 snacks per day), may cause relief from pain or discomfort from the ulcer.
  - ii. For gastric ulcers, you may receive the best relief from symptoms when you eat less often throughout the day (i.e. 3 meals and no snacks per day).
  
5. Aim to include sources of soluble fibre at each meal to help prevent an ulcer from returning. These foods include:
  - fruits and vegetables
  - oatmeal/ oat bran
  - psyllium (e.g. bran buds)
  - legumes (e.g. dried beans/peas)
  
6. You may find other foods that are not listed here which may cause you pain or discomfort when you have a peptic ulcer. If this occurs, it may help to limit or avoid these foods also. It may also help to keep a food journal to keep track of these trigger foods.



# Things to Consider

## 1. **Probiotics:**

Research is currently investigating the use of probiotics in the treatment of ulcers caused by H. Pylori. While no definite results are available, feel free to talk to your dietitian about whether adding probiotics may be helpful for you.

## 2. **Stress:**

Stress does not cause the formation of an ulcer, but it may worsen the symptoms of an ulcer. Try to make lifestyle changes to help you manage your daily stressors.

Additional notes from your Dietitian:

---

---

---

---

Your Dietitian: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Sources:**

- American Dietetic Association Guide to Better Digestion
- Dietitians of Canada: PEN peptic ulcers
- University of Virginia Digestive Health Center: Peptic Ulcers
- Appl Biochem Biotechnol (2014): Effect of oral intake of probiotics