

HEAL ULCERS NATURALLY

Nutrients proven to prevent, soothe, and cure

by Holly Lucille, ND, RN



Hearthburn. Bloating. Upper abdominal pain. Is it just run-of-the-mill indigestion? Or could there be a serious underlying issue, like an ulcer, causing your uncomfortable symptoms?

Ulcers are sores that develop in the lining of the esophagus, stomach, or duodenum, the first section of the small intestine. They tend to emerge gradually, and start sounding alarm bells in the form of belching, nausea, or feelings of fullness. As symptoms worsen, they may include burning

stomach pain and a rapid heart rate that tends to get more intense between meals and at night. In rare cases, ulcers may even cause vomiting, bloody stools, chest or shoulder pain, and loss of breath.

THE CULPRITS

Somewhere along the line you may have been told that ulcers are caused by spicy foods and stress. While these two things may exacerbate ulcers, they aren't truly the cause of them. The two most common origins of ulcers include the use of over-the-

counter pain relievers like aspirin and ibuprofen or a bacteria called *Helicobacter pylori* (*H. pylori*).

Over-the-counter and prescription pain medications called nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) can seriously irritate the lining of your stomach and small intestine, leading to inflammation and eventually ulcers. NSAIDs include ibuprofen, naproxen sodium, and other conventional pain relievers. These medications trigger ulcers by interfering with the stomach's natural

ability to protect itself from gastric acids. Stomach acids are important to the body's digestive process, but they're also extremely powerful. If the stomach's innate protective barrier is compromised, stomach acid can cause serious internal damage, resulting in painful ulcers.

The other major source of ulcers is *H. pylori*, a bacteria people can pick up from food, water, and even utensils. The National Institutes of Health reports that about two-thirds of the world's population is infected with *H. pylori*, though it doesn't always cause symptoms or develop into an illness. *H. pylori* commonly exists in the mucous layers that protect the lining of the stomach and small intestines. Sometimes the bacteria attacks the lining, which causes stomach acid to leak through and cause ulcers. Ulcers may bleed, disrupt normal digestive processes, or cause serious infections.

If you have an ulcer, it's important to treat it so that it doesn't progress into

something worse. Nature can provide some powerful solutions that can help heal ulcers, fight bacteria, and boost your overall immune health.

CALMING DGL

A great first step to healing ulcers is incorporating an effective deglycyrrhizinated licorice product, or DGL, into your daily supplement regimen. DGL helps soothe and calm digestive issues by reducing inflammation and protecting against oxidative stress.

DGL also has the ability to give ulcers the one-two punch because it specifically fights bacteria like *H. pylori* and inhibits the gastrointestinal damage caused by NSAIDs. For the most effective results, look for a DGL that is clinically studied and standardized to contain 3.5 percent glabridin, a powerful anti-inflammatory compound. Some people think that DGL needs to be in a chewable form to be effective, but clinical studies have proven otherwise. In a double-blind, placebo-controlled test, individuals with upset stomach or indigestion took 150 mg of DGL daily, in two separate 75 mg capsule doses. Fifteen days into the test, and again at 30 days, the total combined symptoms for those in the DGL capsule group were virtually cut in half.

SOOTHING D-LIMONENE

D-limonene has healing properties that can also soothe ulcers. This clinically tested component of citrus oil is found in oranges, grapefruits, lemons, and limes. Although citrus fruits are typically associated with causing certain issues in the gastric

tract, like heartburn, d-limonene has been shown to soothe and stop damage that may cause ulcers.

The exact reasons for d-limonene's success are still being investigated, but it is believed to coat and protect the stomach walls and mucosa from the potential damage of stomach acid, without interfering with acid production. D-limonene also supports healthy peristalsis—the muscle action of the intestines that moves food through the digestive system.



CURCUMIN

Another excellent herbal pain reliever and anti-inflammatory to have on board when treating ulcers is curcumin. Curcumin not only reduces inflammatory compounds in the intestines, it can actually strengthen the intestinal wall to prevent harmful bacteria from passing out of the intestines and reaching other organs, such as the liver and kidneys.

Curcumin can also protect the gut from damage caused by NSAIDs. In order for it to be effective, however, curcumin needs to be absorbed by the body. BCM-95 (Curcugreen) curcumin has proven

THE MILK MYTH

A few decades ago, doctors believed the only relief for ulcers was a tall glass of ice-cold milk. It's a myth many sufferers still subscribe to. This is because milk has a buffering effect, which gives temporary relief by neutralizing excess stomach acid. But the calcium and protein contained in milk actually stimulate the production of more acid that can irritate an ulcer within just a few hours. The result is a vicious cycle of pain and relief. If you've just got to have a cold one, opt for coconut, cashew, or almond milk instead.



GOT AN ULCER?

EAT THESE!

While there isn't an "ulcer diet" per se, there are some foods that can help keep symptoms at bay and may even aid in defending against the *H. pylori* bacterium. Most of the foods listed below work because they are extremely rich in fiber, antioxidants, and other healthful phytonutrients that promote a healthy digestive tract. Others contain probiotics that support the beneficial bacteria that make up your microbiome. Try including one or two of the following at every meal:

- APPLES
- BELL PEPPERS
- BLACKBERRIES
- BLUEBERRIES
- BROCCOLI
- CABBAGE
- CARROTS
- CAULIFLOWER
- CHERRIES
- DECAFFEINATED GREEN TEA
- GARLIC
- HONEY
- LEAFY GREENS
LIKE KALE AND SPINACH
- OLIVE OIL
- PROBIOTIC-RICH FOODS,
SUCH AS YOGURT, KEFIR, MISO,
SAUERKRAUT, AND KOMBUCHA
- RADISHES
- RASPBERRIES
- STRAWBERRIES
- TURMERIC

ON THE FLIP SIDE

It's smart to avoid foods that may worsen acid reflux and ulcer symptoms including chocolate, acidic foods like citrus and tomatoes, and spicy foods.

higher absorption because it utilizes turmerones, or turmeric essential oils. By grinding curcumin into very fine particles and blending it with turmeric essential oil, this specific curcumin yields a more potent and effective supplement.

MAKE SOME CHANGES

No matter how many supplements you take, they won't truly lower your risk of developing an ulcer or ease symptoms unless you pair them with a healthy lifestyle. Some of the changes you can make include:



Sidestepping over-the-counter pain relievers like aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin), or naproxen (Aleve). Instead, use acetaminophen (Tylenol) to relieve pain.



Learning to manage stress.

One Danish study of 17,525 people found that those with the highest level of everyday stress were at greater risk for peptic ulcers. Try meditation, yoga, or exercise to help alleviate stress.



Cutting out the caffeine.

Not only can caffeine interfere with sleep, it also increases acid production and may exacerbate symptoms.



Avoiding alcohol. Alcohol increases the production of stomach acid, which irritates an ulcer and worsens symptoms. Drinking alcohol also relaxes the lower esophageal sphincter, allowing stomach acid to splash back up into the esophagus, triggering reflux.



Not smoking. Smoking stimulates the production of stomach acid. It can also delay the healing of an ulcer and has been linked to a recurrence of ulcers.

SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP

If symptoms like heartburn, nausea, and stomach pain are leading you to suspect you have an ulcer, the best thing you can do is seek medical attention. Your healthcare provider may be able to determine what's at the root of your problem, as well as how to treat it. In the meantime, the supplements and lifestyle changes listed above can help you ease symptoms and restore comfort naturally. ■



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