

Your Pathway for Managing Dyspepsia (adults)

What is dyspepsia?

- A word used to describe a group of upper belly symptoms that cause pain and discomfort (sometimes called indigestion).
- Many people will have symptoms of dyspepsia at some point in their lifetime.
- Usually cared for by healthcare providers in your family doctor's office.

What is the dyspepsia patient pathway?

It is a map for you and your healthcare providers to follow. It makes sure the care you are getting for dyspepsia is safe and helpful in managing your symptoms.

You and your healthcare providers may modify the pathway to best suit your healthcare needs.

If symptoms cannot be managed over time, you and your healthcare providers may decide a referral to a specialist would be helpful.

1. Check your symptoms

- Pain or discomfort in the upper part of the stomach, often after meals
- Feeling uncomfortably full after eating
- Nausea (feeling like throwing up)
- Loss of appetite
- Bloating

2. Make lifestyle changes to manage your symptoms (see over for details)

- Identify foods that cause symptoms and try to limit or avoid them
- Eat smaller, more frequent meals
- Lose weight, if you need to
- Stop or reduce the use of tobacco, alcohol, and cannabis
- Avoid wearing tight clothing around your midsection

3. Tests that may be done

- Blood tests
- Breath or stool tests for a bacterial infection in your stomach
- Other tests are rarely needed

Tell your healthcare providers if you have these symptoms:

- Stool that is black in colour or has blood in it
- Trouble swallowing or pain while swallowing food
- Feeling that food gets stuck while swallowing
- Vomiting that doesn't stop
- Vomiting with blood in it
- Losing weight without meaning to

Talk to your healthcare providers if your symptoms don't improve, get worse, or keep interfering with your everyday activities

Once you find something that works for you, stick with it.

You may need to keep trying other options to find what works best to manage your symptoms.



4. Medicine that may be tried

- Many options can be used to lower how much stomach acid your body makes, help digest food, or lower stomach pain
- Talk with your healthcare providers about what medicines may be right for you



What do I need to know about my symptoms and dyspepsia?

Working through the dyspepsia patient pathway can take several months:

- Your healthcare providers will ask you questions about your health and review any medicines you are taking.
- They may suggest certain tests to learn more about possible causes of your symptoms.
- They will talk to you about possible lifestyle habits that may be causing your symptoms and how you can make changes that could help you feel better.
- You may find it helpful to write down your symptoms and what seems to cause them (e.g. certain food or stress). You and your healthcare providers can make a plan to help manage your symptoms using this information.
- Together, you may decided to try certain medicines to help in treating your symptoms.
- You may use medicines for a short amount of time (or possibly longer) depending on whether your symptoms improve.

To manage your symptoms, try to:

- Eat smaller, more frequent meals instead of 2 or 3 large meals.
- Wait 2-3 hours after you eat before you lie down.
- Change what you eat or drink. Fatty foods, spicy foods, foods with a lot of acid in them, coffee, mint, and chocolate can be causes of symptoms.
- Avoid wearing tight clothing around your midsection.
- Stop or reduce the use of alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis.
- Lose weight, if you need to. Losing just 3-5 kg (7-11 lbs) can help.

Seeing a specialist is only recommended if:

- Your symptoms continue or get worse after following treatment and management options in the dyspepsia pathway.
- You and your healthcare providers identify concerning symptoms or test results.

You can find more information in the great resources below:


- Canadian Digestive Health Foundation cdhf.ca
* search Dyspepsia
- Alberta Healthy Living Program ahs.ca/info/page13984.aspx
 - Workshops on chronic pain and stress reduction
- MyHealth.Alberta.ca myhealth.alberta.ca
* search Dyspepsia
- Nutrition Education Materials ahs.ca/NutritionResources

Write any notes or questions you may have here:

Please provide feedback about this patient pathway by completing a short [survey](https://bit.ly/DHSCNsurvey) (bit.ly/DHSCNsurvey) or email us at Digestivehealth.SCN@ahs.ca



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