



H. pylori: finish treatment, then confirm clearance

Patient information | Source check: 2026-10-16

An infection, not a cancer diagnosis

H. pylori can cause stomach inflammation and ulcers. Many people have no symptoms. It increases some long-term risks, but most infected people never develop stomach cancer. Treatment does not guarantee relief of every symptom.

Use the right test

Stool antigen and breath tests assess active infection. Stomach biopsies can be tested if gastroscopy is needed. Gastroscopy can also assess complications and, in some circumstances, provide samples for culture to help tailor antibiotic treatment. Blood antibodies can remain positive after an old infection and cannot confirm treatment success.

Prepare with your prescriber

Stool testing generally needs at least two weeks without a PPI and four weeks without antibiotics or bismuth. Agree a safe medicine plan first. Do not stop necessary prescribed treatment from an online checklist.

Take the prescribed course

Eradication combines a PPI such as omeprazole with antibiotics, sometimes with bismuth. Complete the full course: missing doses or stopping early can encourage resistance and make later treatment harder. Side effects are usually mild and temporary. Take medicines as prescribed, with food when instructed, and ask whether a probiotic is suitable. Contact the prescribing team if side effects prevent completion.

Confirm that it cleared

Arrange a faecal antigen test, usually 6-8 weeks after treatment. Avoid PPIs, antibiotics and bismuth for the minimum periods advised so the result is accurate. Check even if symptoms resolve.

Symptoms and other findings need review

Ongoing discomfort may have another cause, and ulcers or tissue changes need their own follow-up. Vomiting blood, black stools with faintness or sudden severe pain need urgent assessment.

Call 111 for collapse, difficulty breathing or swelling of the lips, tongue or throat. Do not wait for a routine appointment or email reply.

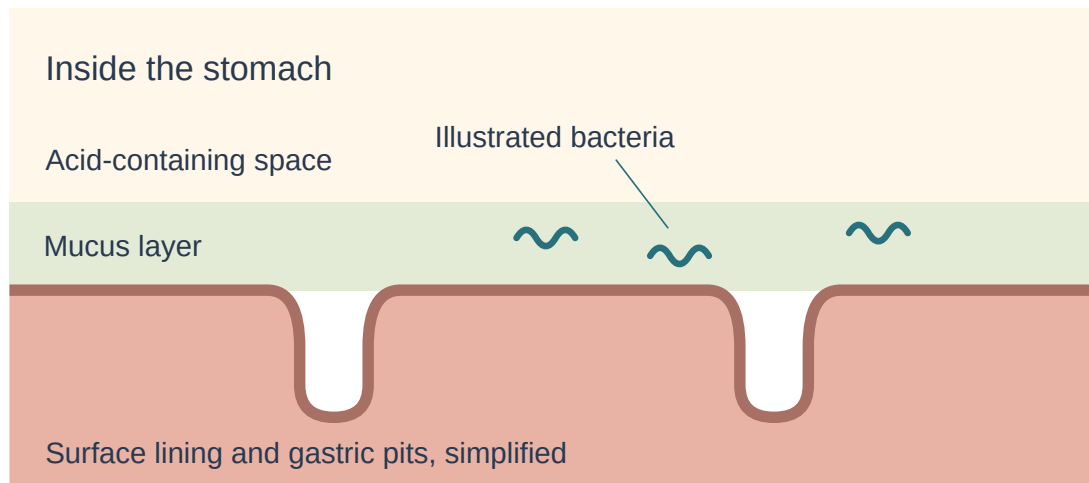




Understand the infection, then check treatment worked

Where is the infection?

H. pylori lives beside the stomach lining



Most infected people do not have an ulcer or cancer.

H. pylori lives near the surface of the stomach lining. It can cause inflammation and ulcers. Finding it does not mean you have cancer, and it may not explain every symptom.

Read this illustration alongside the advice in this guide.

