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## Digestion: Upper GI - Pathology and Assessment

Dr. Ritamarie Loscalzo

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**Medical Disclaimer:** The information in this presentation is not intended to replace a one-on-one relationship with a qualified health care professional and is not intended as medical advice. It is intended as a sharing of knowledge and information from the research and experience of Dr. Ritamarie Loscalzo, drritamarie.com, and the experts who have contributed. We encourage you to make your own health care decisions based upon your research and in partnership with a qualified health care professional.



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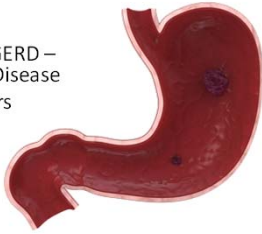
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### What Can Go Wrong

- ✓ No Stomach Acid: Achlorhydria
- ✓ Low Stomach Acid: Hypochlorhydria
- ✓ Too Much Stomach Acid: Hyperchlorhydria
  - Peptic Ulcers
  - Gastritis
- ✓ Acid in the Wrong Place: GERD – Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease
- ✓ H. Pylori Infection → Ulcers
- ✓ Stomach Cancer
- ✓ Enzyme Insufficiency
- ✓ Pancreatitis
- ✓ Pancreatic Cancer



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## Stomach – Symptom Assessment

Low Stomach Acid	Excess Stomach Acid or Ulcer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Excessive belching, aching, or burning 1-4 hours after eating</li> <li>✓ Gas immediately following a meal</li> <li>✓ Offensive breath</li> <li>✓ Difficult bowel movements</li> <li>✓ Sense of fullness during and after meals</li> <li>✓ Difficulty digesting fruits and vegetables</li> <li>✓ Undigested foods found in stools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Stomach pain, burning or aching 1-4 hours after meals</li> <li>✓ Feeling hungry an hour or two after eating</li> <li>✓ Heartburn when lying down or bending forward</li> <li>✓ Temporary relief from antacids, food, milk, and carbonated beverages</li> <li>✓ Digestive problems subside with rest and relaxation</li> <li>✓ Heartburn due to spicy foods, chocolate, citrus, peppers, alcohol, and caffeine</li> </ul>



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## Stomach Assessment

Physical Exam	Tests
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Tender spot 1 inch below end of sternum and towards left rib cage,</li> <li>✓ Tender spot between 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> ribs on left</li> <li>✓ Signs of low protein: poor quality nails, hair, and skin</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ HCl challenge</li> <li>✓ Heidelberg test</li> <li>✓ Low zinc on zinc assay test</li> <li>✓ H. pylori test: blood, stool</li> <li>✓ Low ferritin</li> <li>✓ Protein and globulin +/-</li> <li>✓ BUN +/-</li> <li>✓ Phosphorus –</li> </ul>



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## HCl Challenge

- ✓ Home test to determine need for stomach acid supplementation.
- ✓ Start with ONE 500-650 mg capsule (not tablet) containing both hydrochloric acid (HCl) and 150 mg of pepsin.
- ✓ Take HCl after a few bites of food; **do not take on an empty stomach or after meals.**
- ✓ If you have no discomfort (burning or warm sensation), add one capsule per meal.
- ✓ If you experience pain, burning, or a warm sensation, take one of the following:
  - Take 1 teaspoon slippery elm in 8 ounces warm water
  - ¼ cup aloe vera juice
  - ¼ teaspoon baking soda in water
- ✓ Next meal, go back to the dose that caused no pain.



**DO NOT** go above the maximal dose of 80 grains for the average man and 60 grains for the average sized woman.

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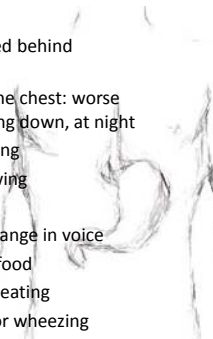
## Evaluating Gastroesophageal Reflux (GERD, AKA Heartburn)

### Symptoms

- ✓ Food feels trapped behind breastbone
- ✓ Burning pain in the chest: worse with bending, lying down, at night
- ✓ Nausea after eating
- ✓ Difficulty swallowing
- ✓ Hiccups
- ✓ Hoarseness or change in voice
- ✓ Regurgitation of food
- ✓ Sore throat after eating
- ✓ Possibly: Cough or wheezing

### Possible Causes

- ✓ Overeating
- ✓ Vigorous exercise after eating
- ✓ Alcohol
- ✓ Caffeine – coffee, chocolate
- ✓ Tight garments
- ✓ Eating while or right before reclining
- ✓ Smoking
- ✓ Stress



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## Causes of Abnormal Stomach Secretions

- ✓ Autoimmune diseases
- ✓ Chronic unremitting stress – sympathetic nervous system overdrive/dominance
- ✓ Nasty bugs
- ✓ Devitalized diet and lack of green and bitter foods
- ✓ Taking proton pump inhibitor drugs
- ✓ H pylori
- ✓ Chronic overeating
- ✓ Thyroid and adrenal problems
- ✓ Genetic issue with acid production (native/Pima, Hispanic, North Eastern European descendants)
- ✓ Gastric irritants: alcohol, coffee, cigarettes
- ✓ Allergens in your food
- ✓ Deficiency of zinc, vitamin B1, folate



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## Symptoms of Pancreatic Deficiency

- ✓ \*\*Gas, bloating, and indigestion ½ hour to several hours after eating
- ✓ \*\*Chronic bloat and gas, 1-2 hours after eating
- ✓ Chronic constipation, diarrhea, or alternating
- ✓ Frequently see undigested food in the stool
- ✓ Frequent bubbles or grease in the toilet bowl
- ✓ Stools are chronically very light in color
- ✓ Stool contains undigested food, foul smelling
- ✓ Stool is mucous-like, greasy, or poorly formed
- ✓ Fat soluble vitamin deficiencies (i.e., keep taking vitamin D, but can't get levels to improve)
- ✓ Taking steps to improve yourself but not getting the appropriate response
- ✓ Indigestion and fullness last 2-4 hours
- ✓ Difficulty losing weight
- ✓ Pain, tenderness, soreness on left side under rib cage
- ✓ Excessive passage of gas
- ✓ Nausea and/or vomiting
- ✓ Frequent urination
- ✓ Decreased thirst and appetite



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### Causes of Low Pancreatic Enzymes

- ✓ Autoimmune diseases
- ✓ Cystic fibrosis
- ✓ Alcohol
- ✓ Chronic unremitting stress
- ✓ Eating too much heavy processed food
- ✓ Chronic overeating
- ✓ Overeating cooked foods



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