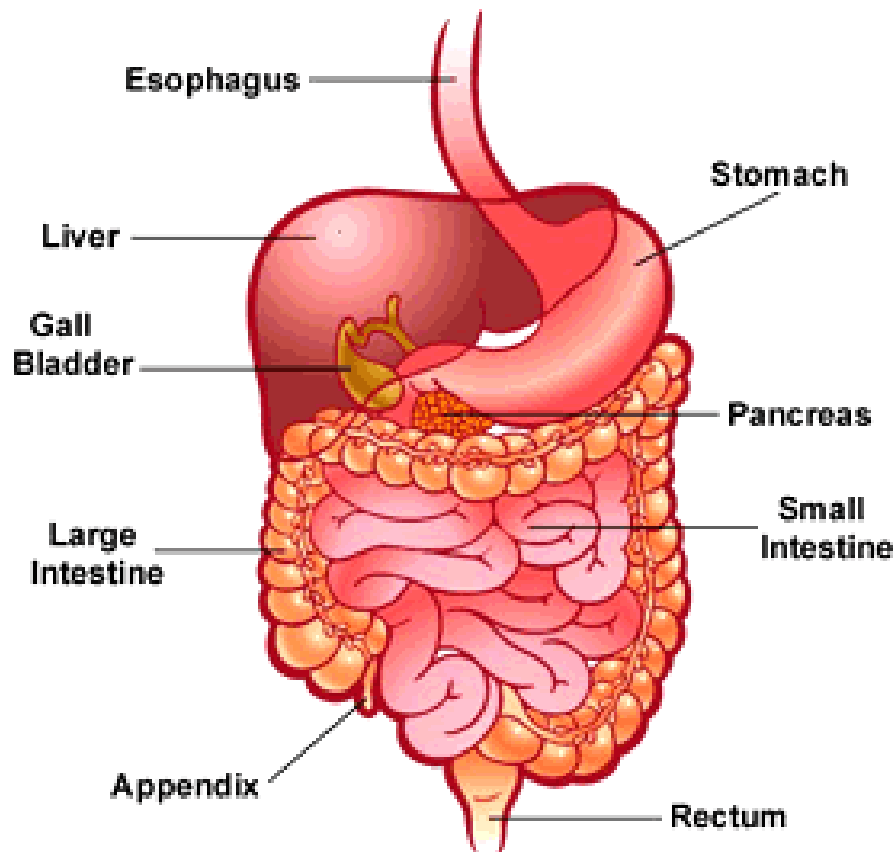


## GI TRACT DISORDER (Digestive Disorder)

### What are gastrointestinal diseases?



Gastrointestinal diseases affect the gastrointestinal (GI) tract from the mouth to the anus. Gastrointestinal conditions are disorders of the digestive system, an extensive and complex system that breaks down food in order to absorb water and extract nutrients, minerals and vitamins for the body's use, while then removing unabsorbed waste .

Also known as the gastrointestinal (GI) tract, the digestive system comprises a range of vital digestive organs, including:

- The mouth
- Esophagus (the “feeding pipe”)
- Stomach

- Small and large bowels
- Rectum, and anus

The GI tract also includes connected organs - the liver, gallbladder, and pancreas.

*"Unfortunately, there are many different gastrointestinal issues, so it is easy to mistakenly neglect them. Some GI problems are mild and usually go away on their own, but some conditions are serious enough that you have to see a physician or gastroenterologist."*

There are two types: functional and structural. Some examples include nausea/vomiting, food poisoning, lactose intolerance and diarrhea.

### **What are functional gastrointestinal diseases?**

Functional diseases are those in which the GI tract looks normal when examined, but doesn't move properly. They are the most common problems affecting the GI tract (including the colon and rectum). Constipation, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), nausea, food poisoning, gas, bloating, GERD and diarrhea are common examples.

### **Many factors may upset your GI tract and its motility (ability to keep moving), including:**

- Eating a diet low in fiber.
- Not getting enough exercise.
- Traveling or other changes in routine.
- Eating large amounts of dairy products.
- Stress.
- Resisting the urge to have a bowel movement, possibly because of hemorrhoids.
- Overusing anti-diarrheal medications that, over time, weaken the bowel muscle movements called motility.
- Taking antacid medicines containing calcium or aluminum.

- Taking certain medicines (especially antidepressants, iron pills and strong pain medicines such as narcotics).
- Pregnancy.

### **What are structural gastrointestinal diseases?**

Structural gastrointestinal diseases are those where your bowel looks abnormal upon examination and also doesn't work properly. Sometimes, the structural abnormality needs to be removed surgically. Common examples of structural GI diseases include strictures, stenosis, hemorrhoids, diverticular disease, colon polyps, colon cancer and inflammatory bowel disease.

### **General symptoms of gastrointestinal conditions**

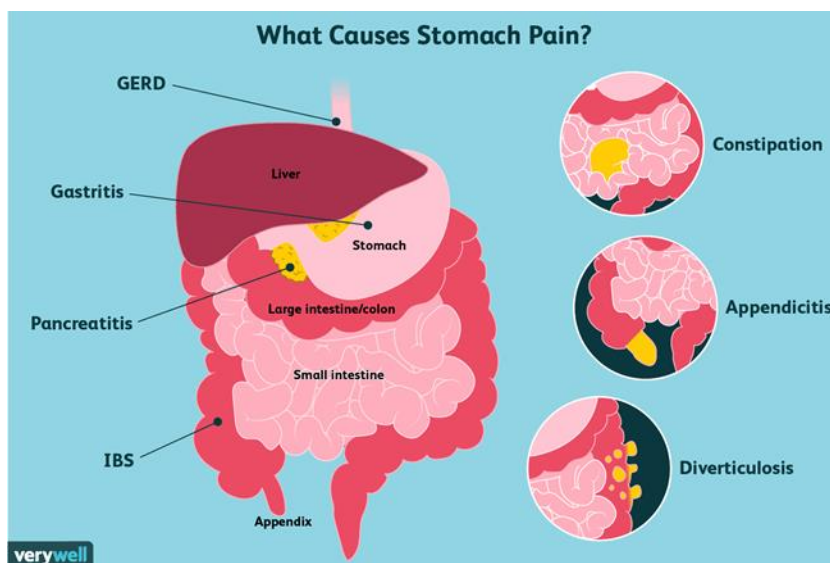
Symptoms of digestive disorders obviously vary from condition to condition and from person to person. However, some symptoms are common to most gastrointestinal problems. Common symptoms include:

- Abdominal discomfort (bloating, pain or cramps)
- Unintentional weight loss
- Vomiting and nausea
- Acid reflux (heartburn)
- Diarrhea, constipation (or sometimes both)
- Fecal incontinence
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Difficulty swallowing.

***If you see blood in your vomit or stool, get in touch with your physician immediately.***

## The 13 most common gastrointestinal conditions:

1. Celiac Disease
2. Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS)
3. Lactose Intolerance
4. Chronic Diarrhea
5. Constipation
6. Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD)
7. Peptic Ulcer Disease
8. Crohn's Disease
9. Ulcerative Colitis
10. Gallstones
11. Acute and Chronic Pancreatitis
12. Liver Disease
13. Diverticulitis



# TREATMENT

## Treatment for gastritis usually involves:

- ▶ Taking antacids and other drugs to reduce stomach acid, which causes further irritation to inflamed areas.
- ▶ Avoiding hot and spicy foods.
- ▶ For gastritis caused by *H. pylori* infection, your doctor will prescribe a regimen of several antibiotics plus an acid blocking drug (used for heartburn).
- ▶ If the gastritis is caused by pernicious anemia, B12 vitamin shots will be given.
- ▶ Eliminating irritating foods from your diet such as lactose from dairy or gluten from wheat.
- ▶ Once the underlying problem disappears, the gastritis usually does, too.
- ▶ You should talk to your doctor before stopping any medicine or starting any gastritis treatment on your own.



## Keeping your digestive system healthy is imperative for your well-being

Your digestive system includes the gastrointestinal (GI) tract as well as the liver, pancreas, and gallbladder. When you eat, food first enters your mouth, before passing down the esophagus into the stomach. From here, it travels through the large and small intestines, before reaching the rectum/anus. At every different stage, various enzymes, gut flora, bacteria, the blood supply, and hormones are assisting in the complex digestion process.

## For better digestive health, follow these simple tips:

1. Eat a high-fiber diet. ...
2. Be sure you're **getting** both soluble and insoluble fiber. ...
3. Minimize your intake of foods high in fat. ...

4. Select lean meats. ...
5. Add probiotics to your diet. ...
6. Follow a regular eating schedule. ...
7. Drink plenty of water.

**Right Bite**

# GOOD DIGESTIVE HEALTH

**Fermented Foods**  
A bowl of kimchi, a whole nut, and a bunch of green grapes.

**High Fiber Foods**  
A variety of grains including quinoa, rice, and wheat, along with artichokes and asparagus.

**Polyphenol Foods**  
A cup of green tea with a lemon slice, a small bowl of blueberries, and a piece of dark chocolate.

**Live Cultures**  
A blue bowl filled with white yogurt.

**Anti-Inflammatory Foods**  
A pile of yellow turmeric powder, fresh ginger root, and sliced ginger.