

GASTROPARESIS

Gastroparesis, also known as delayed gastric emptying, literally means “stomach paralysis.” It is a condition in which the stomach does not contract properly to crush food, and the movement of food from the stomach to the small intestine slows down or stops.

Damage to the vagus nerve, which controls the muscles of the stomach, typically causes gastroparesis.

Gastroparesis usually afflicts adults, and it is often a complication of diabetes, surgeries involving the abdomen, or a side effect of medication. As many as 5 million people have this condition.

SYMPTOMS

A person with gastroparesis might feel nauseated or full after eating only a little food. Other symptoms include:

- Gastroesophageal reflux, also known as acid reflux, in which the contents of the stomach flow back up into the esophagus.
- Stomach pain.
- Abdominal bloating.
- A lack of appetite.
- Muscle weakness.
- Night sweats.
- Vomiting of undigested food.

Symptoms are usually noticed during or after eating. Rich foods, greasy foods and carbonated beverages can make the condition worse.

TREATMENT

Your doctor might order tests that scan or measure the performance of the stomach. Next, changes in diet can help manage symptoms. Prokinetic medication, such as Reglan, or an antibiotic might be prescribed. If neither medication nor dietary changes works, severe cases might require surgical options such as insertion of a feeding tube.

RESOURCES

The **UK Digestive Health Program** specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic diseases affecting the digestive system.

ukhealthcare.uky.edu/digestive
859-323-0079

International Foundation for Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders
www.iffgd.org