

Gastroparesis – Stomach paralysis

About 1 in 4 adults have symptoms that resemble those of gastroparesis.

1 Introduction

Gastroparesis is a condition that interferes with digestion. The nerves of the stomach wall send signals for contraction, causing the stomach to empty itself. When the nerve is damaged, it slows or stops food from being properly digested, resulting in gastroparesis. Please use this guide to understand the cause, symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment of gastroparesis.

2 Cause

Gastroparesis is caused by injury to the vagus nerve. The nerve can become damaged due to:

- Uncontrolled diabetes
- Anorexia or Bulimia nervosa
- Gastric surgery
- Parkinson's disease
- Multiple sclerosis
- Chemotherapy
- Medication such as narcotics or antidepressants

3 Symptoms

Many adults experience similar symptoms to those of gastroparesis. Although it is

uncommon to develop this disease, it is important to discuss with your doctor if you experience symptoms such as:

- Heartburn or reflux disease
- Vomiting undigested food
- Poor appetite and weight loss
- Poor blood sugar control
- Abdominal bloating
- Early satiety
- Nausea

4 Diagnosis

Diagnosis of gastroparesis is primarily based on your medical history, your symptoms, a physical exam, and medical tests. Some medical tests may include lab tests, upper gastrointestinal endoscopy, or imaging tests.

5 Treatment

Treatment varies depending on its underlying cause. In most cases, changes in diet or medication will alleviate some of the symptoms. In extreme cases, surgical placement of a feeding tube. Feeding tubes are usually temporary and only used when gastroparesis is severe or when blood sugar levels cannot be controlled by any other methods.

Did you know?

Gastroparesis affects around 1% of men and 4% of women in the United States

For more information on this and other rare diseases, please visit www.rarediseases.org

References:

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/gastroparesis/symptoms-causes/syc-20355787>

<https://rarediseases.org/rare-diseases/gastroparesis/>