

Rapid Gastric Emptying

National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse



National
Institute of
Diabetes and
Kidney
Diseases

NATIONAL
INSTITUTES
OF HEALTH

What is rapid gastric emptying?

Rapid gastric emptying, also called dumping syndrome, occurs when undigested food empties too quickly into the small intestine.

What are the symptoms of rapid gastric emptying?

Early rapid gastric emptying begins either during or right after a meal. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, bloating, cramping, diarrhea, dizziness, and fatigue. Late rapid gastric emptying occurs 1 to 3 hours after eating. Symptoms include hypoglycemia, also called low blood sugar; weakness; sweating; and dizziness. Experiencing both forms of gastric emptying is not uncommon.

What causes rapid gastric emptying?

Rapid gastric emptying is a result of stomach surgery such as fundoplication or gastric bypass. The condition is also seen in people with Zollinger-Ellison syndrome, a rare disorder involving extreme peptic ulcer disease and gastrin-secreting tumors in the pancreas.

How is rapid gastric emptying diagnosed?

Doctors diagnose rapid gastric emptying primarily on the basis of symptoms in people who have had gastric surgery. Tests may be needed to exclude other conditions that have similar symptoms, such as irritable bowel syndrome.

How is rapid gastric emptying treated?

Treatment includes changes in eating habits and medication. People who have rapid gastric emptying should eat several small meals a day that are low in carbohydrates and drink liquids between meals—not with them. People with severe rapid gastric emptying will likely need to take prescribed medicine to slow their digestion. In the most serious cases, doctors may recommend surgery.



U.S. Department
of Health and
Human Services

You may also find additional information on this topic using the following databases:

The NIDDK Reference Collection is a collection of thousands of materials produced for patients and health care professionals, including fact sheets, brochures, and audiovisual materials. Visit www.catalog.niddk.nih.gov/resources.

MedlinePlus brings together a wealth of information from the National Library of Medicine, the National Institutes of Health, and other government agencies and health-related organizations. MedlinePlus offers easy access to medical journal articles, a medical dictionary and medical encyclopedia, health information in Spanish, hospital and physician directories, drug and supplement lists, interactive patient tutorials, links to hundreds of clinical trials, and the latest health news. Visit www.medlineplus.gov.

This publication may contain information about medications used to treat a health condition. When this publication was prepared, the NIDDK included the most current information available. Occasionally, new information about medication is released. For updates or for questions about any medications, please contact the U.S. Food and Drug Administration at 1-888-INFO-FDA (463-6332), a toll-free call, or visit their website at www.fda.gov. Consult your doctor for more information.

National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse

2 Information Way
Bethesda, MD 20892-3570
Phone: 1-800-891-5389
Fax: 703-738-4929
Email: nddic@info.niddk.nih.gov
Internet: www.digestive.niddk.nih.gov

The National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse (NDDIC) is a service of the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK). The NIDDK is part of the National Institutes of Health of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Established in 1980, the Clearinghouse provides information about digestive diseases to people with digestive disorders and to their families, health care professionals, and the public. The NDDIC answers inquiries, develops and distributes publications, and works closely with professional and patient organizations and Government agencies to coordinate resources about digestive diseases.

Publications produced by the Clearinghouse are carefully reviewed by both NIDDK scientists and outside experts.

This publication is not copyrighted. The Clearinghouse encourages users of this fact sheet to duplicate and distribute as many copies as desired.

This fact sheet is also available at www.digestive.niddk.nih.gov.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
AND HUMAN SERVICES
National Institutes of Health

NIH Publication No. 08-4629
December 2007