Clo-test for Helicobacter pylori

Information for patients
Endoscopy
What is Helicobacter pylori?

Helicobacter pylori is a type of bacteria that lives in the sticky fluid that coats the lining of your stomach.

Helicobacter pylori infections are common and people of all ages can be infected. It is possible to be infected without realising it because the infection often does not cause symptoms.

In some people the bacteria can sometimes weaken the protective mucous coating of the stomach. It is this weakening that allows acid to get through to the sensitive lining beneath, making it more vulnerable to damage.

Both the acid and the bacteria can irritate this sensitive lining, causing it to become sore and this can sometimes develop into an ulcer.

It is not clear exactly why some people are more vulnerable to the effects of Helicobacter pylori bacteria than others.

What are the symptoms of an ulcer?

The most common symptom of an ulcer is abdominal discomfort, which most patients describe as:

- A dull gnawing ache
- An ache that comes and goes for several days
- An ache that occurs 2-3 hours after a meal
- An ache that occurs in the middle of the night (when the stomach is empty)
- An ache that is relieved by eating
- An ache that is relieved by antacids
Other symptoms may include:

- Weight loss
- Poor appetite
- Bloating, belching
- Nausea
- Vomiting

Some people with ulcers have very mild symptoms or even none at all.

**How is Helicobacter pylori diagnosed?**

During your gastroscopy, we have taken a small biopsy. This is called a Clo-test. The Clo-test takes about 5 minutes to process and we may be able to give you the result before you leave the department. A copy of the result will also be sent on to your GP.

**How is Helicobacter pylori treated?**

If your Clo-test shows you have Helicobacter pylori your GP will need to prescribe some antibiotics for you. You should contact your GP 2-3 days following your gastroscopy to obtain these.

If the result of the Clo-test shows you do not have Helicobacter pylori, but the Endoscopist has seen an ulcer in your stomach during your gastroscopy, you will be prescribed medication which will help to reduce the acid you produce in your stomach and heal the ulcer.
There are two types of drugs that may be used to treat your ulcer. It is up to your hospital consultant or GP to decide which is most suitable for you and you may be given any one of the following:

- **Proton Pump Inhibitors** – which block the production of stomach acid:
  - Omeprazole
  - Esomeprazole
  - Lansoprazole
  - Pantoprazole
  - Rabeprazole

- **H2 Receptor Antagonists** – which prevent the release of acid into the stomach:
  - Cimetidine
  - Famotidine
  - Nizatidine
  - Ranitadine

Alternative formats can be available on request. Please email: sth.alternativeformats@nhs.net