

Functional Dyspepsia

What Is Functional Dyspepsia?

Functional dyspepsia, often referred to as indigestion, is a common condition that causes discomfort or pain in the upper abdomen. Unlike other digestive conditions, there is no identifiable structural cause for the symptoms, even after thorough testing. Functional dyspepsia is classified as a “functional” disorder, meaning it affects how the stomach and digestive system work rather than being caused by a visible abnormality.

What Are The Symptoms Of Functional Dyspepsia?

The symptoms of functional dyspepsia can vary but commonly include:

- Pain or discomfort in the upper abdomen
- Feeling full quickly when eating
- Bloating or a heavy feeling in the stomach
- Nausea or occasional vomiting
- A burning sensation in the upper abdomen or chest (similar to heartburn)

Symptoms can come and go, often triggered by eating, stress, or specific foods. While functional dyspepsia is not dangerous, it can significantly affect your quality of life.

What Causes Functional Dyspepsia?

The exact cause of functional dyspepsia is not fully understood, but several factors may contribute to the condition, including:

- **Delayed stomach emptying:** Food may take longer to move from the stomach to the small intestine.
- **Increased sensitivity:** The stomach and upper intestine may be more sensitive to stretching or pressure.
- **Stress and anxiety:** Psychological factors can affect how your digestive system functions.
- **Helicobacter pylori (H. pylori) infection:** This bacterial infection, which can irritate the stomach lining, may play a role in some cases.
- **Dietary triggers:** Spicy, fatty, or acidic foods, alcohol, and caffeine can exacerbate symptoms in some individuals.

When Should You Seek Medical Advice?

You should see a doctor if your symptoms persist for more than two weeks or interfere with your daily life. Seek urgent medical attention if you experience:

- Unexplained weight loss
- Vomiting blood or material resembling coffee grounds
- Dark, tarry stools (indicating internal bleeding)
- Severe or worsening abdominal pain

These symptoms could indicate a more serious underlying condition and require prompt evaluation.

How Is Functional Dyspepsia Diagnosed?

At Birmingham Gastroenterology Clinic, we use a thorough approach to diagnose functional dyspepsia. This may include:

- **A detailed medical history:** Your doctor will ask about your symptoms, diet, stress levels, and any medications you take.
- **Physical examination:** This helps rule out other potential causes of your symptoms.
- **Blood tests:** To check for infections, inflammation, or other underlying conditions.
- **Helicobacter pylori testing:** A breath, stool, or blood test may be used to detect this bacteria.
- **Endoscopy:** A thin, flexible tube with a camera is passed through the mouth to examine your stomach and upper digestive tract for abnormalities.

If no structural cause is found, a diagnosis of functional dyspepsia may be made.

How Is Functional Dyspepsia Treated?

Although there is no single cure for functional dyspepsia, many treatments can help manage symptoms effectively. These include:

Lifestyle changes:

- Eating smaller, more frequent meals
- Avoiding trigger foods such as fatty, spicy, or acidic foods
- Reducing alcohol and caffeine intake
- Avoiding lying down immediately after eating
- Managing stress through relaxation techniques, exercise, or mindfulness

Medications:

- **Antacids or proton pump inhibitors (PPIs):** Reduce stomach acid and help alleviate

symptoms.

- **H. pylori treatment:** If this infection is present, a course of antibiotics and PPIs may be recommended.
- **Prokinetic agents:** Medications that help move food through the digestive system more quickly.
- **Antidepressants:** Low doses of certain antidepressants can help manage pain and improve gut sensitivity.

Psychological therapies:

- **Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)** or counselling can help address the link between stress, anxiety, and digestive symptoms.

Why Choose Birmingham Gastroenterology Clinic?

At Birmingham Gastroenterology Clinic, we specialise in diagnosing and managing functional dyspepsia and other digestive conditions. Our experienced team takes a holistic approach, tailoring treatment plans to your unique needs. We offer advanced diagnostic tools and compassionate care to help you manage your symptoms and improve your quality of life.

Contact Us

If you're struggling with persistent indigestion or upper abdominal discomfort, contact Birmingham Gastroenterology Clinic today to book a consultation. Early diagnosis and tailored care can help you regain control of your digestive health and live more comfortably.