

# Upper Abdominal Pain

## What Is Upper Abdominal Pain?

Upper abdominal pain refers to discomfort or pain in the area between your chest and belly button. It's a common complaint with a variety of possible causes, ranging from minor digestive issues to more serious underlying conditions. At Birmingham Gastroenterology Clinic, we're here to help you understand and treat the root cause of your symptoms.

## What Causes Upper Abdominal Pain?

Upper abdominal pain can stem from various factors, including issues with digestion, muscles, or internal organs. Common causes include:

- **Indigestion (dyspepsia):** Discomfort or bloating after eating, often linked to acid reflux or overeating
- **Gastro-oesophageal reflux disease (GORD):** Stomach acid irritating your oesophagus, causing heartburn and pain
- **Gastritis:** Inflammation of the stomach lining due to H. pylori infection or NSAID use
- **Peptic ulcers:** Open sores in the stomach or small intestine lining, often caused by H. pylori or medications
- **Gallstones:** Hardened deposits in the gallbladder that can block bile flow, leading to upper-right abdominal pain
- **Pancreatitis:** Inflammation of the pancreas, often linked to gallstones or excessive alcohol consumption
- **Hiatus hernia:** When part of the stomach pushes into the chest, causing reflux and discomfort
- **Liver conditions:** Including fatty liver disease or hepatitis
- **Muscle strain:** Due to injury or physical activity

In some cases, upper abdominal pain could indicate more serious conditions like a heart attack or certain cancers. If your symptoms persist or worsen, it's crucial to seek medical advice.

## What Other Symptoms Might You Notice?

Upper abdominal pain can present in different ways, such as a dull ache, sharp pain, or burning sensation. Additional symptoms may include:

- Nausea or vomiting
- Bloating or feeling full quickly
- Heartburn or acid reflux
- Loss of appetite
- Burping or passing wind
- Jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes)

- Unexplained weight loss

Persistent or severe symptoms should be assessed by a medical professional to ensure appropriate care.

## When Should You Seek Urgent Help?

Urgent medical attention is necessary if you experience:

- Sudden, severe pain that does not improve
- Vomiting blood or material resembling coffee grounds
- Black, tar-like stools (a sign of internal bleeding)
- Chest pain or discomfort, which could indicate a heart attack
- Jaundice or unexplained weight loss

## How Is Upper Abdominal Pain Investigated?

At Birmingham Gastroenterology Clinic, we use advanced diagnostic tools to uncover the cause of your symptoms. These may include:

- **Upper GI endoscopy:** A camera is passed into your stomach to check for ulcers, inflammation, or other abnormalities
- **Ultrasound:** To detect gallstones or assess the liver
- **CT or MRI scans:** Detailed imaging of the pancreas, liver, and other organs
- **Blood tests:** To check for infections, liver function, or disease markers
- **H. pylori testing:** To identify the bacteria linked to ulcers and gastritis

## What Treatment Options Are Available?

Treatment depends on the cause of your upper abdominal pain. Common options include:

- **Lifestyle changes:** Avoiding trigger foods, eating smaller meals, and limiting alcohol consumption
- **Medications:** Such as antacids, proton pump inhibitors (PPIs), or antibiotics to reduce acid, treat infections, or relieve inflammation
- **Surgical procedures:** For conditions like gallstones or ulcers that don't respond to medication
- **Dietary advice:** Tailored to improve digestive health and reduce symptoms

Your consultant will work with you to create a personalised treatment plan based on your diagnosis and health needs.

## Why Choose Birmingham Gastroenterology Clinic?

At Birmingham Gastroenterology Clinic, we specialise in diagnosing and treating conditions causing upper abdominal pain. With state-of-the-art facilities and an experienced team, we deliver accurate diagnoses and tailored treatments in a supportive environment.

## Contact Us

If you're experiencing persistent or severe upper abdominal pain, contact Birmingham Gastroenterology Clinic today to book your consultation. Early diagnosis and treatment can make a big difference in managing your symptoms and improving your quality of life.