

# Hiatal Hernia

Each person has specific toxic exposures along with dietary and genetic weaknesses that are causing their symptoms. Toxic exposures can be inorganic like heavy metals, DDT, VOC's, Radio-active waste and any other chemical like food additives or pesticides and fertilizers sprayed on the foods. They can also be organic or living organisms like parasites, bacteria, viruses, or fungi. All the different possible combinations make it difficult to accurately address issues unless you have experienced medical professionals mapping through all your different clinical symptoms.

Dr. Marilyn Tucker founded The Vibrant Health Community to do Symptom Mapping to be able to bring a completely personalized plan for each person. When you join the Vibrant Health Community you have your own medical team of doctor, pharmacist and health coach. This Team specializes in Integrative-Complementary Medicine. They will work with your personal physician to bring you to a place of as much natural healing as your body will allow. For those of you that have health issues that require prescription medications, your Team can help introduce natural measures that can reduce the imbalances and complications that inevitably come with prescription medication. This can reduce side effects and possible additional drugs having to be introduced.

## Definition

Hiatal hernia is a condition in which a portion of the stomach protrudes upward into the chest, through an opening in the diaphragm. The diaphragm is the sheet of muscle that separates the chest from the abdomen. It is used in breathing.

## Alternative Names

Hernia - hiatal

## Causes, incidence, and risk factors

The cause is unknown, but hiatal hernias may be the result of a weakening of the supporting tissue. Increasing age, obesity, and smoking are known risk factors in adults.

Children with this condition usually have it from birth (congenital). It is usually associated with gastroesophageal reflux in infants.

Hiatal hernias are very common, especially in people over 50 years old. This condition may cause reflux (backflow) of gastric acid from the stomach into the esophagus.

## Symptoms

- Heartburn, worse when bending over or lying down
- Swallowing difficulty
- Chest pain
- Belching

A hiatal hernia by itself rarely causes symptoms -- pain and discomfort are usually due to the reflux of gastric acid, air, or bile. Reflux happens more easily in the presence of hiatal hernia, though a hiatal hernia is not the only cause of reflux.

## Signs and tests

- Barium swallow x-ray
- Esophagogastroduodenoscopy (EGD)

## Treatment

The goals of treatment are to relieve symptoms and prevent complications.

Reducing the backflow of stomach contents into the esophagus (gastroesophageal reflux) will relieve pain symptoms. Medications that neutralize stomach acidity, decrease acid production, or strengthen the lower esophageal sphincter may be prescribed.

Other measures to reduce symptoms include:

- Avoiding large or heavy meals
- Not lying down or bending over immediately after a meal
- Reducing weight and not smoking

Failure to control the symptoms by general or medical measures, or the appearance of complications, may require surgical repair of the hernia.

## Expectations (prognosis)

Most symptoms are alleviated with treatment.

## Complications

- Slow bleeding and iron deficiency anemia (due to a large hernia)
- Pulmonary (lung) aspiration
- Strangulation (closing off) of the hernia

## Calling your health care provider

Call your provider if symptoms indicate you may have developed a hiatal hernia.

Call your provider if you have a hiatal hernia and symptoms worsen or do not improve with treatment, or if new symptoms develop.

## Prevention

Controlling risk factors like obesity may play a preventative role.