

DEFINITION

1. **Gastritis** means inflammation of the stomach.
2. The condition is divided into two groups according to the length of the history:
 - 2.1. **Acute gastritis** lasts for hours or days, rarely for more than a week.
 - 2.2. **Chronic gastritis** may continue for many years.

ACUTE GASTRITIS**CLINICAL MANIFESTATIONS**

3. The condition presents suddenly with anorexia, epigastric discomfort or pain, nausea and vomiting. Haematemesis may occur. If the vomiting is severe and prolonged, the patient may become dehydrated. The condition is usually self-limiting, and recovery may be quite rapid. It may be asymptomatic.

AETIOLOGY

4. Many factors may cause acute gastritis. It may be caused by a variety of infectious agents, including viruses and bacteria. Many chemicals may cause it, including toxins ingested accidentally or deliberately and drugs administered therapeutically, especially aspirin and other anti-inflammatory drugs. It may also be caused by ionising radiation and events such as respiratory failure, sepsis, renal failure or severe trauma. It may also be caused by the regurgitation of bile into the stomach, especially after gastric surgery.

CHRONIC GASTRITIS**CLINICAL MANIFESTATIONS**

5. The onset of the condition may be insidious, and it is sometimes asymptomatic. Symptoms may be vague, and include anorexia and persistent epigastric pain. It may come to light when other gastric pathology is being investigated.

AETIOLOGY

6. In general this is poorly understood. There is evidence that the drinking of very hot fluids and the regular ingestion of ethanol causes repeated attacks of acute gastritis, which in turn lead to chronic gastritis, but this has not been confirmed.

7. It is possible that genetic or environmental factors modify the action of mechanical, physical, chemical or other trauma, leading to a self-perpetuating series of events causing chronic gastritis. Infection, nutritional deficiencies and endocrine disturbances have been suggested as causal or contributory factors but there is no unequivocal evidence to confirm this. It has also been suggested that a campylobacter-like organism is a cause, although a cause-and-effect relationship has not been firmly established.
8. Chronic gastritis is common in patients with peptic ulcer, gastric carcinoma and after gastric surgery. It also occurs in pernicious anaemia and other autoimmune disorders.

CONCLUSION

9. **Gastritis** is an inflammation of the stomach which exists both as acute and chronic forms. Various causes have been identified, these being listed above. In individual cases, a cause may not be identified.

REFERENCES

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