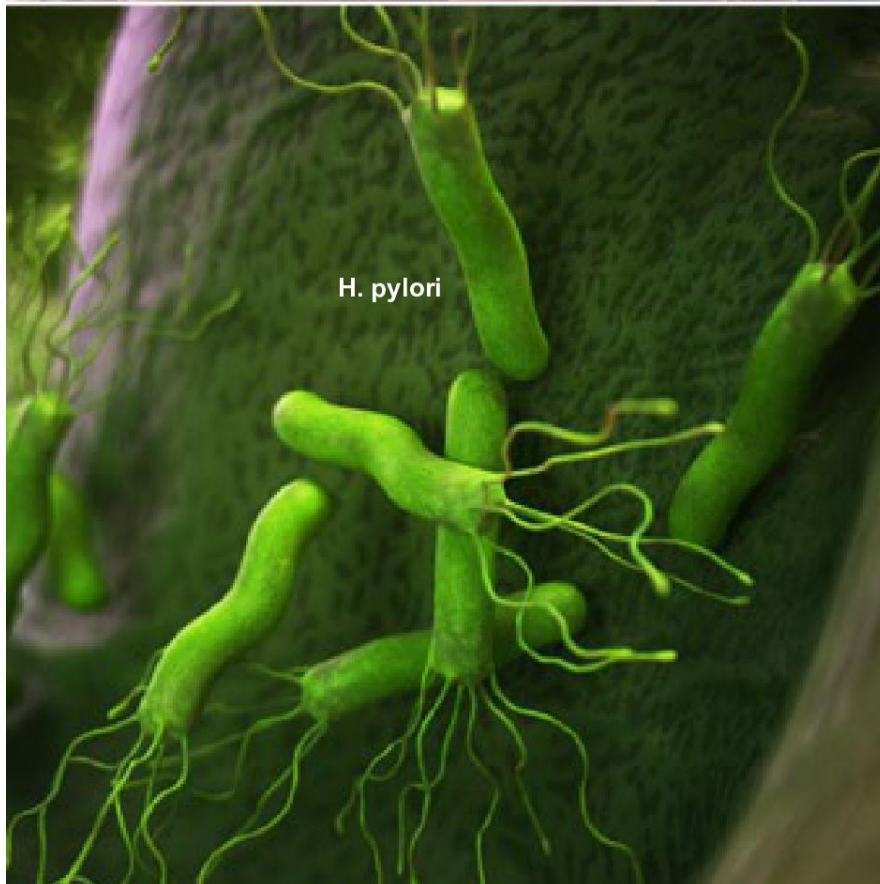
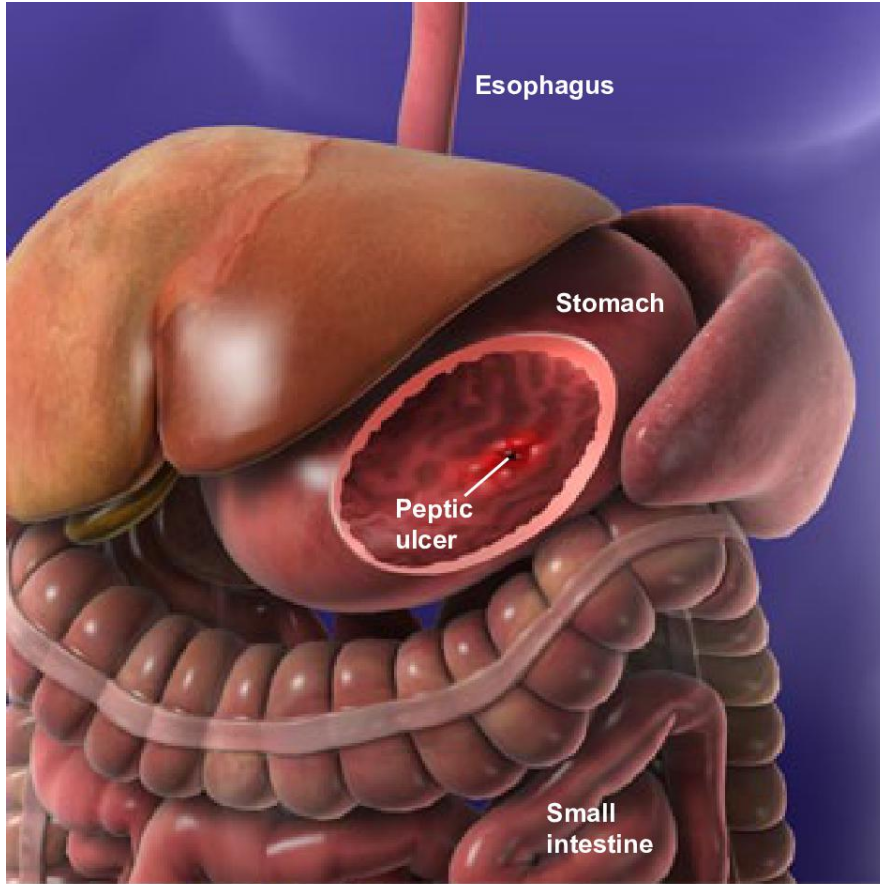




Peptic Ulcer



Overview

This is a sore that forms in the lining of your digestive tract. It develops when stomach acid eats through the mucus layer that protects the walls of your digestive tract. A peptic ulcer can form in your stomach. It can also form in your esophagus, or in the upper part of your small intestine.

Causes and Risk Factors

Most peptic ulcers are caused by a common bacterium called *H. pylori*. It can infect you and can live in your digestive tract. In most people, an *H. pylori* infection does not cause problems. But in some, the bacteria attack the lining of the digestive tract. This allows acid to penetrate the walls. Peptic ulcers can also be caused by frequent use of pain relievers and other medications. Drinking alcohol and smoking can increase your risk for developing ulcers.

Symptoms

Symptoms may include a burning pain in your abdomen. This pain may come and go. It may be worse at night, and when your stomach is empty. You may also experience nausea, vomiting and bloody stools. You may lose weight.

Treatment

Treatment options may include antacids or medications that reduce or block the production of acid in your stomach. You may benefit from medications that protect the lining of your digestive tract. If you have an *H. pylori* infection, you may benefit from an antibiotic to kill this bacteria. Your healthcare provider can create a care plan that is right for your needs.