



INNATE
wellness & medical center

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Hiatal Hernia Self-Adjustment Technique and Treatments

What is a Hiatal Hernia?

When you swallow, your food passes down a long tube known as the esophagus into the stomach. This tube must pass through a muscle known as the diaphragm, which is located near the bottom of your rib cage.

This opening in the diaphragm, which permits the esophagus to pass through, is regulated by a sphincter muscle (or "valve") which relaxes and opens when we swallow to permit the food to pass through the diaphragm and into the stomach.

This sphincter then closes to prevent stomach acid from coming back up into the throat. A hiatal hernia occurs when the top of the stomach rolls or slides up into this opening and becomes stuck there.

Hiatal Hernia Symptoms

Naturally, when part of the stomach is forced into this opening, the sphincter cannot close properly. Thus, stomach acid may travel back up into the esophagus causing burning sensations (heartburn), esophageal spasms, inflammation, or ulcers in the esophagus, which may bleed. The cramped position of the stomach can also stress the vagus nerve, which stimulates the release of hydrochloric acid, which can cause both over and under secretion of hydrochloric acid and stomach enzymes.

It may also affect the sphincter or valve at the bottom of the stomach so that digestive secretions "leak" out of the stomach and are lost before they have completed their job.

The hiatal hernia will also interfere with the movement of the diaphragm muscle. This muscle normally pulls downward to expand the chest capacity and inflate the lungs. Since the hiatal hernia interferes with this movement, the person may be restricted to shallow breathing, or will resort to using the chest and shoulders to expand the lung capacity and take a deep breath.

The esophagus may also "kink" in the throat, which will irritate the thyroid gland and may cause some difficulty in swallowing. Often persons with hiatal hernias will have difficulty in swallowing capsules or tablets as they get the sensation that they are "sticking" in their throat.

The irritation on the vagus nerve can cause reflex irritations throughout the body. The vagus nerve comes from the medulla (a portion of the brain) and goes to the heart, esophagus, lungs, stomach, small intestines, liver, gall bladder, pancreas and colon.

If a person develops poor stomach digestion due to a lack of hydrochloric acid, they will have difficulty digesting foods, which can lead to many digestive disorders, as well as immune and glandular system weaknesses.



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Two other problems that a hiatal hernia may contribute to, are asthma and heart disease. Since the hernia reduces the lung capacity by interfering with natural breathing, it could be a factor in asthma. The hernia may also put pressure on the heart. Gas in the stomach and intestines may put pressure on the hernia and push it against the bottom of the heart.

What Causes a Hiatal Hernia?

The causes of a hiatal hernia are speculative and unique to each individual. However, there are a number causes. First of all there may be a mechanical cause. Improper lifting, hard coughing, severe prolonged vomiting, bouts of heavy lifting, sharp blows to the abdomen (the kind that "knock the wind out of you"), or injury.

Improper lifting may be the biggest mechanical cause of this disorder. If the air is not expelled out of a person's lungs while lifting, it will force the stomach into the area between the diaphragm and the esophagus.

Secondly, there are dietary causes. A hiatal hernia just about always accompanies a swollen ileocecal valve. The ileocecal valve is the valve between the small and large intestines which permits material to enter the colon from the large intestine, but prevents material in the colon from moving back into the small intestine.

When this valve becomes swollen and irritated it cannot close properly. This allows material from the colon to leak back into the small intestine. This is analogous to the sewer backing up into your kitchen. This creates gas and indigestion, which puts pressure on the stomach and presses it tighter against the diaphragm.

The relationship between the ileocecal valve and the hiatal hernia is a chicken/egg situation ... it is hard to know which comes first. However, it is clear that the ileocecal problem aggravates the hernia. Hence, the things that irritate that valve may be causal factors.

Other Causes (direct & indirect):

- Low stomach acid (hydrochloric acid).
- Weak cells caused by consumption of man-made vegetable oils and fats (except olive oil) which are incorporated into the cell membranes making them weak and stiff. Nature intends cell membranes to be made out of 50% saturated fat (lung cells need 100%).
- Poor nutrition, particularly a diet that is high in sugars and carbs, processed or fast foods, or contains white flour products, "bad" man-made vegetable fats and oils (except olive oil), from plants like canola, corn, safflower, soybean, etc., and lacks enough protein and "good" fats like coconut oil, butter, lard, etc.
- Toxins in foods and drinks, i.e. pesticides, additives, preservatives, fluoride, chlorine, and other chemicals, and from the environment or household and personal care products.



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Lastly, there are emotional causes. According to one applied kinesiologist text, a hiatal hernia comes from repressed anger. A person "swallows their anger" and "can't stomach it." When you get angry, you suck your breath upward. If you fail to release this anger, your stomach stays up. I have observed that most of the people with severe hiatal hernias have a great deal of emotional stress and hold a lot of it inside.

Do You Have a Hiatal Hernia?

The easiest way to tell if you or someone you know has a hiatal hernia is to place your fingers on the solar Plexus, just below the breastbone. Then take a deep breath. You should feel the solar plexus expand and move outward.

If there is no movement at the solar plexus and you have to lift your chest and shoulders to take a deep breath, then you probably have a hiatal hernia. You should be able to take a deep abdominal breath without lifting your shoulders.

Hiatal Hernia Exercises

Strengthen the stomach muscles with the following exercises:

- Lie on your back and bend your knees, leaving your feet flat on the floor.
- Lift your buttocks and lower back off the floor, leaving your feet and shoulders on the floor supporting your weight.
- Lower yourself gently.
- Repeat 10 times daily.

Hiatal Hernia: An Overlooked Cause of Digestive Problems

The American Digestive Disease Society has estimated that nearly half of all adults--some 60 million people--have a hiatal hernia.

It occurs more often in women than in men. It affects people of all ages, but is most prevalent in people over 50 and highly likely in people over 65.

The Great Mimic

Hiatal hernia has been called the "great mimic" because it mimics many disorders. A person with this problem can get such severe pains in their chest that they think they are having a heart attack.

They may think they have an over acid stomach because they will regurgitate stomach acid after they eat, or their stomach may hurt so badly they will think they have an ulcer. This is just a sampling of the symptoms that may occur from this disorder.

Correction

Since a hiatal hernia is primarily a mechanical problem, the easiest and best way to correct it is mechanically. Medical doctors have attempted surgery to correct this disorder, but the results tend to be poor. Cutting into this area can further weaken it so that the hernia will return in short order.

A better method is to manipulate the stomach and bring down the hernia by



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hand. You can find a good chiropractor, applied kinesiologist, or massage therapist who understands this problem and knows how to correct it.

Self-Adjustment Technique

Here is a self-help adjustment technique. It isn't as effective as having someone else perform the adjustment, but it may help.

- Drink a pint of warm water first thing in the morning, then stand on your toes and drop suddenly to your heels several times.
- The warm water helps to relax the stomach and diaphragm and puts some weight in the stomach.
- By dropping down suddenly, the weight of the water helps to pull the stomach down. In a mild case, this might be enough to bring the hernia down. In a more severe case it may loosen the stomach and make it easier for someone else to bring it down. It will also help you to keep the stomach down once mechanical corrections have been made.

Untraditional Aids

Until the problem is corrected mechanically, there are some nutritional therapies that may be of help. Immediate, but temporary, relief of pain and discomfort can often be achieved by the use of a mucilaginous herb like slippery elm or comfrey.

These herbs absorb the digestive secretions and help to prevent their traveling back up the esophagus and burning it.

They also help to prevent irritation of the ileocecal valve. Comfrey can also speed the healing of this problem once mechanical adjustments have been made. Okra pepsin is a good combination for this problem as well.

Marshmallow is also helpful in soothing the mucous membranes for hiatal hernias and other ulcerations in the gastrointestinal system.

A digestive aid will help the person obtain the nutrients they need when the hernia is interfering with digestion. This may take the form of a hydrochloric acid supplement like Betaine, or a food enzyme tablet, or perhaps an herbal digestive aid such as peppermint, chamomile, ginger root, fennel, and so forth.

Other food or herb products that have been used to help people with hiatal hernias include: sauerkraut, raw cabbage juice (where ulcerations have occurred), coriander, licorice, marshmallow, and passion flower.

Dietary modifications may be necessary to relieve the problem and to keep it from reoccurring once it has been corrected. Since the pressure of abdominal gas can push the stomach upward you should check to see if you have candida/yeast overgrowth since the toxins it produces include carbon dioxide, which is gas.

Symptoms of a Hiatal Hernia

All of the following symptoms have been connected with a hiatal hernia. If you



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have some of these symptoms especially those marked with an asterisk (*) you may wish to consider being checked for this condition.

1. **Digestive Difficulties-** *Belching, *Bloating, * Heartburn, * Difficulty digesting meat/high protein foods, Tension or pressure at the solar plexus, Sensitivity at the waist, Intestinal gas, Regurgitation, Hiccups, Lack or limitation of appetite, Nausea, Vomiting, Diarrhea, Constipation, Colic in children, Difficulty in gaining weight or overweight, Ulcers.
2. **Breathing And Circulation Problems -** * Difficulty with deep abdominal breathing, * Difficulty in swallowing capsules, *Asthma, *Inability to take a deep breath from the diaphragm, Overall fatigue, Tendency to swallow air, Allergies, Dry tickling cough, Full feeling at base of throat, Pain or burning in upper chest, Pressure in the chest, Pain in the left side of chest, Pressure below breastbone, Lung pain, Rapid heartbeat, Rapid rise in blood pressure, Pain in left shoulder, arm, or side of neck.
3. **Structural Complaints-** TMJ (Temporo-Mandibular Joint Pain which occurs in the jaw), Bruxism (Grinding teeth in sleep), Joint pain, Localized or overall spinal pain, Headaches.
4. **Stress -** *Suppression of anger or other emotions, * Living with or having lived with a quick-tempered person, Dizziness, Shakiness, Mental Confusion, Anxiety attacks, Insomnia, Hyperactivity in children.
5. **Other Ailments-** *Open ileocecal valve, *General weakness, * Difficulty in getting and/or staying healthy, Overactive thyroid, Cravings for sugar or alcohol, *Candida/yeast overgrowth, Menstrual or prostate problems, Urinary difficulties, Hoarseness.

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