

Functional dyspepsia: when test results are normal but digestive symptoms persist

What is functional dyspepsia?

It is a common and benign condition that causes discomfort in the upper abdomen (the 'pit of the stomach'), such as pain, heartburn, a feeling of fullness during meals or satiety after just a few mouthfuls, bloating or nausea. It is described as 'functional' because the stomach and bowel become more sensitive or function differently. Even though tests reveal no serious illness, the quality of life of people who suffer from it is significantly affected.

Why does this happen?

It may be due to:

- **Increased sensitivity of the stomach and gut.** The digestive system can become more sensitive, causing pain or discomfort linked to food or stomach acid. This generally affects sensitive individuals who, in many cases, suffer from anxiety or emotional distress.
- **Changes in the stomach's movement during digestion.** When the stomach empties more slowly or does not relax sufficiently, a feeling of heaviness or sluggish digestion occurs.
- **Stress.** This affects the functioning of the digestive system and increases its sensitivity.
- **Changes in the gut and gut flora.** Changes to the intestinal mucosa (the layer that protects the inside of the gut) or to the gut bacteria, which are normally part of our body (known as the microbiota), increase intestinal sensitivity and contribute to the onset of symptoms.

What can I do to feel better?

Functional dyspepsia is not just a stomach problem, but a sign that certain changes need to be made. **With regular monitoring and a few changes to your habits, many people find their condition improves and are able to lead a normal life.**

● Pay attention to your diet.

Eat smaller portions and take your time over meals. Identify the foods that cause you the most discomfort and avoid them (fatty foods, coffee, alcohol, chocolate, spicy dishes, fizzy drinks).



● Adopt healthy habits.

Get plenty of sleep, give up smoking and take part in moderate physical activity.



● Manage your stress and emotions.

Take part in physical activity and practise relaxation techniques. Psychological support may help some people.



Your doctor may prescribe medication to reduce acidity, improve digestion or help you manage your anxiety or emotional state.

● If ***Helicobacter pylori*** is detected and treated, symptoms usually improve.

● In some patients, taking probiotics may help to restore the balance of the gut flora and relieve symptoms.

Consult your doctor if you have any concerns or if your symptoms change.