


[Home](#)
[About
Gastroparesis](#) →

[Living With
Gastroparesis](#)
[Information
Resources](#)
[Media
Resources](#)
[Contacts
& Links](#)
[Contact
Us](#)

GastroParesis UK

[Diagnosis & Treatment options](#)
[Parenteral nutrition](#)
[Enterra therapy \(GES\)](#)
[Specialists view of GES](#)
[Funding applications for GES](#)

GastroParesis UK

ABOUT GASTROPARESIS

Support - Information - Awareness - Research

What is gastroparesis?

Gastroparesis is a disorder where the stomach takes too long to empty or known as '**delayed gastric emptying**' or '**gastric dysmotility**'.

It occurs when the nerves to the stomach are damaged or stop working entirely. When the vagus nerve, which controls the flow of food through the digestive system, becomes damaged resulting in the muscles of the stomach and intestines not work effectively, paralysis of the stomach, called **gastroparesis** or **gastric stasis**, occurs.

It can affect anyone of any age. It is not known what causes the damage to the vagus nerve. Gastroparesis is more prevalent in women than men at an approximate ratio of 7:1.

It is a known complication in **diabetics**, and it is estimated that a possible 10% of diabetics may have gastroparesis, although only 2-3% of those present as severe cases. This is known as '**Diabetic Gastroparesis**'.

Those without diabetes can suffer from the condition also, and may be linked to procedures or conditions such as:

- Complications following surgery, not necessarily related to the stomach, including transplant surgery.
- ME
- CFS
- PVFS
- CFIDS
- MS
- GERD
- Autonomic Neuropathy
- Dumping Syndrome
- Scleroderma
- Ehlers Danlos Syndrome
- Following pregnancy
- Viral illnesses
- MNGIE
- SOD Syndrome
- CVSA

This is known as '**Idiopathic Gastroparesis**'.

Statistically (McCallum 1999) the breakdown of attributed cause is approximately a third of cases are idiopathic, a third are diabetic and the remaining third is apportioned to the side affects of other medical conditions and/or complications of surgery.

Clinical papers have stated that it is important to eliminate the conditions such as **Chronic Mesenteric Ischemia** and **Giardiasis** - an infection caused by the giardia lamblia parasite, as the cause of symptoms, as they mimic those of gastroparesis.

Estimated predictions of new diagnosis of GP cases, in the UK alone, are thought to be approximately 50 cases per year (2012). As the number of diabetics increases so too will the number of gastroparesis cases. It is estimated that there are 5 million sufferers in the US alone.

Symptoms of gastroparesis include:

- Early feeling of 'fullness' whilst eating
- Abdominal bloating
- Pain or discomfort in the abdominal area
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Weight loss or in some cases weight gain

For many, gastroparesis can be managed through medication and diet alone. In its severest form **parenteral nutrition** (tube feeding) may be required.

The pages in this section will look at the methods of diagnosis of gastroparesis and the treatment options available.

Also see '[Definitions](#)' page for brief outlines of terms used.



[Home](#) | [About Gastroparesis](#) | [Living With Gastroparesis](#) | [Information Resources](#) | [Media Resources](#) | [Contacts & Links](#) | [Contact Us](#)

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