Dear Alice,

What natural food or herb can help soothe stomach ulcers?

Answer

Dear Reader,

Ulcers can really eat at you. They typically occur in the lining of the top of the small intestine, the duodenum (aka duodenal ulcers), or the stomach (aka peptic ulcers). Various options exist for treating and/or possibly preventing them.


Although prescription medications are used to treat ulcers, some individuals may choose to treat ulcers without medication, typically by eating (or avoiding) certain foods, taking nutritional supplements, and herbs. Of course, herbs and nutritional supplements are not without risk, especially since they are not regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, so be sure to discuss any natural treatment options with a healthcare provider first.

The University of Maryland Medical Center [4] recommends herbs such as DGL-licorice, mastic, and cranberry for relieving ulcer symptoms. Additional remedies that may also be helpful include homeopathy, acupuncture, and/or chiropractic treatment. If you prefer food (or nutritional supplements) as a strategy, you may want to consider:

- Eating foods that are high in antioxidants [5] (i.e. blueberries, tomatoes, and bell pepper), flavonoids (i.e. apples, onions, garlic, and tea), and B-vitamins (i.e. almonds, beans, and dark leafy greens)
- Reducing red meat consumption
- Avoiding foods containing refined white flour, sugar, and trans-fats (usually found in commercially baked goods)
- Avoiding drinks that may irritate the stomach (i.e. coffee, alcohol, and carbonated drinks)
- Cooking with healthy oils, such as olive oil or vegetable oil
- Reducing stress by doing relaxing activities, such as meditation and yoga, or any other
activity that you enjoy (Check out Meditation, yoga, tai-chi? how do I begin? [6] in the Go Ask Alice! general health archives for some tips)
- Supplementing your diet with a probiotic and a daily multivitamin containing vitamins A, C, E, the B-vitamins, and trace minerals (i.e., magnesium, calcium, zinc, and selenium)
  List adapted from Peptic Ulcer [4] from the University of Maryland Medical Center.

If you have been diagnosed with ulcers or if you think you may have them, you may want to consider discussing your symptoms with a healthcare provider. By working together, you and your provider can develop a treatment plan that meets your needs.

Here’s hoping that, in time, the ulcers are the sore losers!

Alice!
Category:
Nutrition & Physical Activity [7]
Food Choices & Health [8]

Related questions

Ulcer or tapeworm? [9]
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Resources

Medical Services (Morningside) [15]
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