



Research Summary: H. Pylori #2

As featured in Dr. Kenny Mittelstadt's video:
"What to Eat for H. Pylori (And Why Each Food Actually Helps)"
Date of Publication: 06/02/2026

Research Context:

This week's topic explores how H. pylori is not just a simple stomach bug or acid reflux issue. It can disrupt the entire digestive cascade, changing how your stomach signals enzymes, bile release, protein breakdown, motility, and even how food physically moves through the digestive tract. That helps explain why many people with H. pylori experience bloating, fullness, constipation, reflux, nutrient deficiencies, or food reactions even when they are trying to eat "healthy."

The research below highlights how certain foods may help support the stomach environment, reduce oxidative stress, influence bacterial behavior, and lower digestive strain while the body is under stress from H. pylori. The goal is not to frame food as a cure, but to better understand how nutrition interacts with the deeper communication networks involved in digestion and stomach lining resilience.

Key Findings from the Research:

Study 1 (PMID 19349290):

Researchers explored whether broccoli sprouts rich in sulforaphane could influence H. pylori activity and stomach inflammation in both animals and humans. Sulforaphane is a naturally occurring plant compound concentrated in broccoli sprouts and other cruciferous vegetables like cabbage and Brussels sprouts. In the human portion of the study, participants consumed broccoli sprouts daily for eight weeks. Researchers observed measurable reductions in markers tied to H. pylori activity and stomach inflammation while the sprouts were actively being consumed. Interestingly, the effects diminished after the intervention stopped, suggesting the food was helping shape the stomach environment rather than permanently removing the bacteria. Sulforaphane also activates antioxidant defense systems in the body, helping reduce oxidative stress, which is a form of cellular wear and tear created during chronic inflammation.

Study 2 (PMC9827256):

This systematic review examined how polyphenols, which are colorful plant compounds found in foods like cranberries, blueberries, pomegranate, turmeric, green tea, and many vegetables, may interact with H. pylori. One important finding was that certain polyphenols appear to interfere with the bacteria's ability to attach itself to the stomach lining. H. pylori uses specialized proteins called adhesins to anchor itself into the stomach's mucosal layer and resist being cleared. Some polyphenols, especially compounds found in cranberry, may compete for these same attachment sites, making the environment less supportive for bacterial adhesion. Researchers also discussed broader antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects linked to polyphenol-rich foods.

Study 3 (PMID: 21947884):

Established digestive physiology shows that stomach acid is not only important for breaking down food. It also acts as a major signaling mechanism for the entire digestive cascade. H. pylori produces an enzyme called urease that helps neutralize stomach acid so the organism can survive inside the stomach environment. When stomach acid becomes weaker, several downstream effects can occur. Protein digestion becomes less efficient because certain enzymes are not activated properly. Signals to the pancreas and gallbladder may weaken, reducing digestive enzyme and bile release. Food may sit longer in the stomach, slowing motility and increasing fermentation, bloating, fullness, and pressure after meals. This helps explain why many people with H. pylori experience broad digestive symptoms that extend beyond reflux or ulcers alone.



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Functional Medicine Connections:

Here's how these pieces fit together: your stomach is not an isolated organ. It acts like the opening signal in a digestive communication network.

When H. pylori alters stomach acid levels, the body may start adapting downstream. Protein breakdown becomes less efficient. Gallbladder signaling can weaken. Digestive enzymes may not release properly. Food may sit longer than it should. Over time, this can create a pattern where the digestive system feels "heavy," reactive, or overwhelmed even with healthy foods.

This is also why cooking method matters more than many realize. Soft, moisture-rich proteins and gently cooked vegetables often reduce the digestive workload placed on a system operating with reduced efficiency.

The research around sulforaphane and polyphenols also highlights something important in functional medicine: foods do not only provide calories.

Practical Reflections & Takeaways:

Think about your own patterns: do you notice more bloating, heaviness, reflux, or pressure after tougher proteins, large meals, or raw fibrous foods? That may reflect digestive signaling strain, not simply "food sensitivity."

Another question worth exploring: when your stress, sleep, or eating rhythm worsens, do your digestive symptoms worsen too? The stomach, nervous system, enzyme signaling, and gut motility are deeply connected communication networks rather than isolated systems.

Your symptoms are not always the problem themselves. Sometimes they are your body's way of showing where the digestive cascade is struggling to adapt.

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