

SEE YOUR DOCTOR

Stomach Pain Sufferers Can Now Breathe Easier

(NAPSA)—Many Americans who suffer from persistent gastrointestinal complaints may find relief in a surprising way. These people may unknowingly be infected with a serious bacterium called *Helicobacter pylori* (*H. pylori*).

Discovered in 1983, *H. pylori* was determined to be the major cause of many serious gastrointestinal (GI) conditions, including gastritis, inflammation of the stomach lining and peptic ulcer disease. This infection often goes unnoticed and untreated, causing persistent upper GI complaints for years in many individuals.

Though approximately one in three Americans is infected, testing, diagnosis and treatment of *H. pylori* remains relatively low. If left untreated, *H. pylori* can lead to serious gastrointestinal conditions, including gastric cancer. When diagnosed and treated appropriately, however, *H. pylori* is completely curable. There is now an innovative, accurate and non-invasive means to test for active *H. pylori* infection that can ultimately lead to alleviating upper GI discomfort and disease for many people.

“Testing for *H. pylori* can be very beneficial for anyone who has a history of gastrointestinal discomfort,” said David Y. Graham, M.D., head of the Digestive Disease Division at Baylor College of



A new, safe breath test can detect a bacteria that causes stomach pain.

Medicine in Houston. “An early diagnosis of *H. pylori* and treatment for the infection can mean less discomfort and medication in the long term, as well as less anxiety about the possibility of other more serious conditions, such as ulcers and gastric cancer.”

There are four types of tests used to detect *H. pylori*: blood, stool, tissue and breath.

Blood test samples are taken at a doctor's office and sent out to a lab for results. Because these tests detect only antibodies for the *H. pylori* infection, they cannot accurately show whether an individual has an active infection rather than a previous, already-resolved infection.

Stool tests can detect active

infection, but they require patient administration of the test at home. As a result, patient compliance may be compromised because these tests entail special storage, handling and delivery of stool samples to a lab. In addition, the administration of both blood and stool tests involves some risk for healthcare providers in the doctor's office and in the lab due to biohazardous materials.

Tissue tests are invasive and involve the collection and analysis of stomach biopsies through endoscopy. While endoscopy is an accurate diagnostic tool, it can be costly and time consuming and usually entails some patient discomfort.

Breath tests are non-invasive tests administered in a doctor's office. The patient provides an initial breath sample, ingests a urea-based solution and then provides a second breath sample. A diagnostic machine then analyzes the two breath samples to confirm the presence of *H. pylori*.

Fortunately, with the recent development of BreathTek,[™] there is now a quick, easy, safe, and accurate breath test for detecting *H. pylori* infection. BreathTek uses carbon-13—a naturally occurring form of carbon. The test delivers results in less than six minutes. To learn more, ask your doctor or visit www.breathtek.com.