

GERD

What is GERD?

Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease affects millions of people. GERD occurs when the muscle at the end of your esophagus does not close properly causing the liquid contents of the stomach to regurgitate (backup or reflux) into the esophagus. This can inflame and damage the lining of the esophagus and also can be inhaled into the trachea and cause reactive airway disease.

What Causes GERD?

1. Smoking
2. Alcohol Use
3. Obesity
4. Pregnancy
5. Hiatal Hernia
6. Certain Foods

What Foods Can Aggravate GERD?

1. Citrus fruits
2. Chocolate
3. Caffeinated drinks
4. Garlic, onions
5. Mint flavoring
6. Spicy foods
7. Tomato based foods (spaghetti sauce, chili, pizza)

What are the Symptoms?

1. Persistent heartburn
2. Pain in the chest
3. Hoarseness in morning

4. Trouble swallowing
5. Dry cough
6. Bad breath
7. Belching/burping
8. Sensation of food stuck in your throat
9. Choking
10. Tightness in throat sour taste in mouth

How is it Diagnosed?

1. Therapeutic trial by physician (try patient on medication to see if symptoms get better)
2. Barium/video esophagram
3. Endoscopy/EGD (biopsy)

How is it Treated?

1. Over the counter antacids
2. Proton pump inhibitors
3. Surgery
4. Life style changes

What are the Changes Needed?

1. Stop smoking
2. Do not drink alcohol
3. Lose weight
4. Eat small meals
5. Wear loose fitting clothes
6. Do not eat close to bedtime
7. Sleep with 2 pillows or raise the head of the bed 4-6 inches with blocks or books
8. Avoid food irritants
9. Avoid lying down for 4 hours after eating

