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## GastroEsophageal Reflux Disease ~ GERD ~

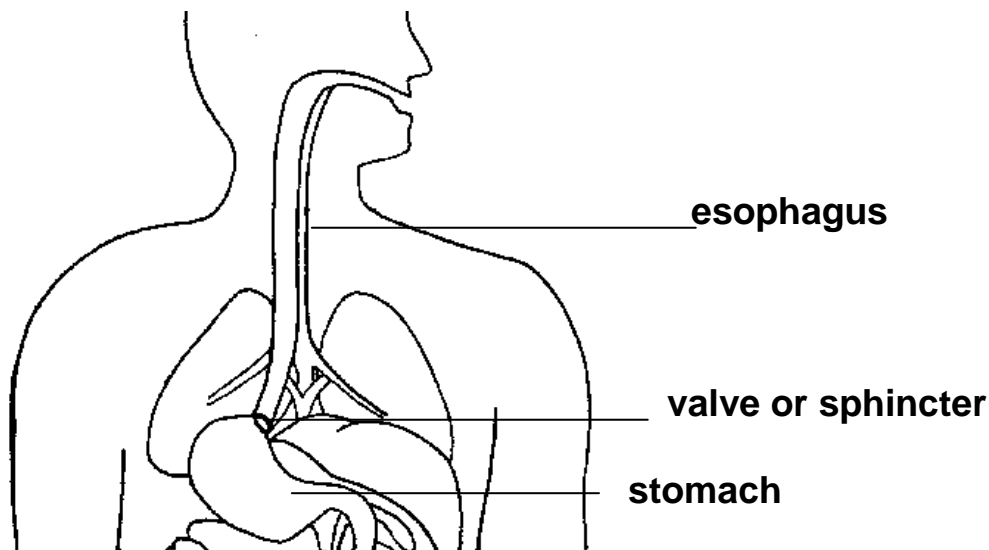
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### What is gastroesophageal reflux?

The esophagus is the tube that carries food and liquid from your mouth to your stomach. There is a valve or sphincter at the end of the esophagus where the stomach begins. Gastroesophageal reflux occurs when acid from the stomach comes back up the esophagus due to a weak or relaxed valve.

Reflux causes inflammation of the inside of the esophagus. This may or may not produce symptoms. When acid reflux comes very high up the esophagus, you may cough or have breathing problems. Many people have a burning feeling in the chest also called heartburn.

**GastroEsophageal Reflux Disease** is also called reflux, acid reflux or **GERD**.



Reflux often occurs after meals. A full stomach makes more acid, empties slowly and relaxes the valve between the stomach and the esophagus. All this makes reflux worse.

### What is the treatment for reflux?

There are many ways to help manage reflux. It may take a while to find the treatments that work best for you. Treatment involves medication, diet and lifestyle changes.

In order for treatment to succeed, you must follow all of the guidelines in this handout as carefully as possible. Your need for medication may be significantly reduced or eliminated when you follow these guidelines.

## Medication

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You and your health care provider will work together to find the medication that is best for you. Take your medication exactly as ordered. Do not make changes without talking to your health care provider first.

If you use antacids (such as Tums, Roloids, Gaviscon) take these 30 minutes after meals and if needed, 3 hours after meals. Never take antacids at the same time as an H<sub>2</sub>-antagonist or Proton Pump Inhibitor (PPI) medication. When prescribed, these medications should be taken before meals. Some names for these types of medications are Ranitidine (Zantac), Cimetidine (Tagamet), Famotidine (Pepcid), Nizatidine (Axid) Metaclopramide (Maxeran, Reglan), Domperidone (Motilium), Omeprazole (Losec), Lansoprazole (Prevacid), Pantoprazole (Pantoloc), Esomeprazole (Nexium) and Rabeprazole (Pariet).

Take medication as your health care provider advises. Let your health care provider know if the medication is not helping you. There are some medications that should be avoided such as adult ibuprofen and adult aspirin. You should talk to your health care provider about all medications you are taking.

## Diet and Nutrition

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Reflux tends to occur after meals because the full stomach produces more acid, empties more slowly and relaxes the valve at the lower end of the esophagus.

- You should eat smaller meals. Avoid having your largest meal at least 3 hours before bedtime. For most people this is at night, but if you are a shift worker this may be a different time of day.
- Avoid eating and drinking for at least 3 hours before going to bed or lying down. You can have your medication with water but avoid other food and drinks before lying down. The longer you can extend this period of fasting before lying down, the better. The stomach empties more slowly after a meal. Stomach contents regurgitate more easily when lying in a horizontal position. When your stomach is empty, there is nothing to go back up into the esophagus when you lie down.
- Avoid eating hot or heavily spiced foods which irritate the esophagus and stomach.
- Avoid very cold or carbonated drinks such as gingerale or cola if you find these irritating.
- In general, if a particular food gives you pain or discomfort, avoid it. Follow the food guidelines on the next page.

Food type	Food recommended	Foods that may cause distress
<b>Milk and milk products</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skim milk, skim buttermilk, yogurt</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whole milk and drinks made with whole milk</li> <li>• All cream, whipped cream</li> <li>• Chocolate drinks</li> </ul>
<b>Grain products</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bread, cereal, rice couscous etc. as tolerated</li> </ul>	
<b>Meat and alternatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lean meat, fish and poultry (all visible fat removed and prepared without added fat)</li> <li>• Eggs prepared without added fat</li> <li>• Low fat cheese or cottage cheese</li> <li>• Peanut butter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fried and highly spiced meat, fish and poultry</li> <li>• Bacon, luncheon meat, sausages, wieners</li> <li>• Cheese other than low fat and cottage cheese</li> <li>• Nuts</li> </ul>
<b>Fruits and vegetables</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As tolerated</li> <li>• May need a Vitamin C supplement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citrus (e.g., orange, grapefruit, lemon)</li> <li>• Fruit and juice</li> <li>• Tomato, onion, garlic, Green pepper, radish, Avocado, olives</li> </ul>
<b>Fats and oils</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small amounts of butter, oil, mayonnaise, salad dressing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly seasoned salad dressing</li> </ul>
<b>Desserts</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Angel food cake, fruit whip, gelatin</li> <li>• Desserts made with skim milk, sherbert, ice milk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ice cream</li> <li>• Pastries and baked goods such as pie, cake, cookies, doughnuts</li> </ul>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Postum™, caffeine free carbonated drinks as tolerated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alcohol, liqueurs</li> <li>• Coffee (regular and decaf), tea, hot chocolate</li> <li>• Peppermint, spearmint, Chocolate</li> <li>• Gravy</li> <li>• Potato chips</li> </ul>

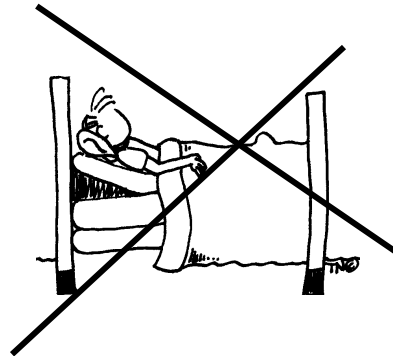
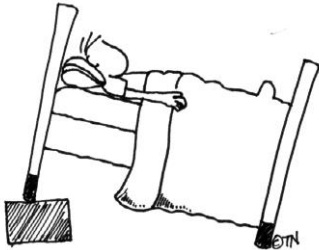
# Lifestyle

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## Raise the head of your bed:

Raise the head of your bed on 6 inch (15 cm) blocks. This angle helps prevent acid from your stomach going up into your esophagus.

Do not use pillows. Pillows cause you to bend in the middle and may make the problem worse. You can also sleep on your left side to help.

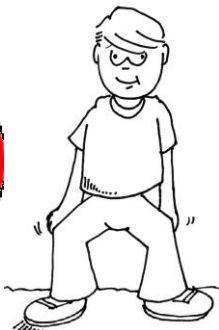


## Avoid tight fitting clothes:

Avoid clothes that fit tightly around the waist as they increase pressure in your abdomen.

## Bend from your knees:

Use your knees to bend. Bending from the waist increases reflux symptoms and is not good for your back.



## Exercise and activity:

Exercise to keep fit. Wait at least 1 hour after eating before you exercise or increase your activity.

## Lose weight:

Being overweight increases reflux. If you are overweight, talk to your health care provider or ask to speak to a dietitian to help you start a weight loss program.

## Stop smoking:

Smoking makes reflux and breathing problems worse. Talk to your health care provider about ways to stop smoking or contact the Smoker's Helpline at 1-877-513-5333

