

Treatment

Treatment aims at decreasing the amount of reflux or reducing damage to the lining of the esophagus from refluxed materials

Treatment include Over-The-Counter (OTC) medications. OTC medications usually provide temporary relief.

♦ **Antacids.**

Antacids can help neutralize acid in the esophagus and stomach and stop heartburn.

They can be effervescent (to dissolve in water), chewable tablets or liquids. Long-term use of antacids can result in side effects If antacids are needed for more than 2 weeks, a doctor should be consulted.

Other treatments include:

- ♦ **H2 blockers**
- ♦ **Proton pump inhibitors (PPIs).**

These are mainly used for chronic reflux and heartburn. They can be OTC or prescribed by your doctor. They work by lowering the amount of acid that your stomach produces. And usually work best before meals i.e. taken on an empty stomach.

ABOUT

ACID INDIGESTION

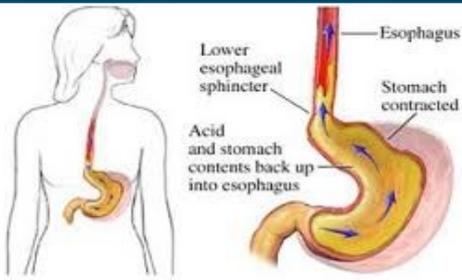
ACID REFLUX

HEARTBURN

GERD (Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease)



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Definition

Gastroesophageal reflux (GER) happens due to regurgitation of gastric acid (gastric reflux) from the stomach into the oesophagus. It is also known as:

- ◆ Acid indigestion
- ◆ Acid reflux
- ◆ Heartburn

Signs and Symptoms

This causes a painful, burning feeling in the middle of your chest, behind your breastbone, and in the middle of your abdomen. This discomfort may radiate to the neck or throat.

Other signs include:

- ◆ The taste of food or stomach acid in the back of mouth.
- ◆ Nausea/vomiting
- ◆ Painful swallowing
- ◆ Respiratory problems
- ◆ Burping/ hiccups

Causes

Common causes include infection with *Helicobacter pylori* and use of pain relievers namely nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). Less common causes include alcohol, smoking, pregnancy, eating too quickly, eating high-fat foods, caffeinated foods/drinks and stress

Prevention

The long term solution for GER lies in preventing the symptoms from occurring. This would include lifestyle and dietary changes such as:

- ◆ Not skipping meals
- ◆ Eating smaller more frequent meals
- ◆ Sleeping on a slight angle. Elevating the head of the bed on 6-inch blocks or sleeping on a specially designed wedge reduces heartburn by allowing gravity to minimize reflux of stomach contents into the esophagus. Do not use pillows to prop yourself up; that only increases pressure on the stomach.
- ◆ Avoiding foods which can cause heartburn e.g. avoiding spicy foods, alcohol, caffeine, oily/greasy foods,
- ◆ Eating a full meal when taking NSAIDs

Prevention continued

- ◆ Foods and beverages that can irritate a damaged esophageal lining, such as citrus fruits and juices, tomato products, and pepper, should also be avoided if they cause symptoms.
- ◆ Not lying down for three hours after eating, Avoid reclining and slouching when sitting.
- ◆ Eating meals at least 2 to 3 hours before bedtime may lessen reflux by allowing the acid in the stomach to decrease and the stomach to empty partially
- ◆ Stopping smoking
- ◆ Wear loose-fitting clothing around your abdomen. Tight clothing can squeeze your stomach area and push acid up into your esophagus.

