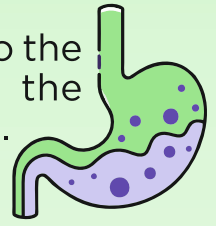


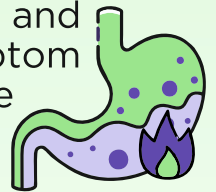
1. What is GERD?

The esophagus is the tube that carries food from mouth to the stomach. Gastroesophageal reflux happens when the stomach contents come back up into the esophagus. Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is a severe and long-lasting condition in which reflux causes repeated symptoms or leads to complications over time.^{1,2}



2. Symptoms & Causes

GERD commonly causes symptoms such as heartburn and regurgitation.¹ Heartburn, which is the most common symptom of GERD, usually feels like a burning sensation behind the breastbone, moving up to the neck and throat.²



GERD may develop when the muscle at the end of the esophagus (lower esophageal sphincter) becomes weak & does not close properly. This allows stomach contents to leak back, or reflux, into the esophagus and irritate it.¹

3. Diagnosis

Your doctor diagnoses GERD by reviewing the symptoms and medical history. If symptoms don't improve with lifestyle changes and medicines, you may need medical tests.¹



4. What can I do to prevent or reduce reflux?³



Limit Caffeine:

Limit coffee to 2-3 cups per day. Limiting consumption of other caffeine-containing beverages (tea, soft drinks) may also be helpful.



Avoid Tight Clothing:

Tight belts, tight pants or girdles can increase the pressure on the stomach.



Avoid Foods That Cause Your Symptoms:

Foods to avoid are:

- Spicy and fatty foods
- Tomato and citrus juices (such as grapefruit and orange juices)
- Chocolate, mints, coffee, tea, cola, and alcoholic drinks



Stop Smoking



Do Not Lie Down for 2 Hours After Eating:

Allow gravity to work. Also, avoid bending over at the waist to pick up things; instead, bend at the knees



Bed Blocks:

Elevate the head of your bed 2-6 inches with wood blocks or bricks. Using extra pillows is not a good substitute. Use of a foam wedge beneath the upper half of the body is an alternative



Maintain Your Ideal Weight:

Excess weight increases the amount of pressure constantly placed on your stomach. Even small amounts of weight loss may help.

5. Can exercise help acid reflux?

Exercising regularly, for at least 30 minutes, three times a week, helps alleviate symptoms of GERD. If someone is experiencing an acid reflux flare, it is potentially advisable to stick to low-impact exercises.^{4,5}



Low-impact exercises may include:

- Walking
- Light jogging
- Stretching
- Riding a stationary bike
- Swimming
- Yoga

6. Risks of exercising during a flare-up⁴

Generally, the risk of acid reflux may be reduced by exercising. However, intensely exercising may cause acid reflux symptoms to worsen, particularly during a flare. If someone experiences a flare, they need to avoid high intensity intensity workouts, such as:

- running or sprinting
- high intensity weight training
- gymnastics

If your workout includes stomach crunches, abdominal presses or high impact exercise, it might make acid reflux worse. That's because anything that causes you to put pressure on your abdomen can relax the lower sphincter muscle, allowing the stomach acid to flow back up the esophagus.⁵

7. Tips for exercising with GERD⁵

Don't be discouraged and quit exercising because you worry it will trigger acid reflux. Exercise is critical for maintaining (or losing) weight, which directly affects GERD and your overall health.

These tips should help you feel better during exercise:

- Try to avoid exercising immediately after eating. Allow one to two hours to pass. Once food has moved through your stomach, it's much less likely to reflux.
- If you do eat an hour or two before exercising, avoid foods that trigger GERD for you. For most people, complex carbohydrates are the best choice to consume before a workout because the stomach metabolizes these foods more quickly.
- Avoid exercises that require you to lie flat, as this allows reflux to occur more easily.
- Skip strenuous exercising that may jostle your stomach.
- Drink water while you exercise to stay hydrated and aid digestion. Don't overdo it, as though, as liquid can reflux just like food.
- Wear loose/comfortable clothing. Tight waistbands can put additional pressure on your abdomen.
- Try yoga.

8. Other consequences of uncontrolled GERD

Reflux may affect more than just the esophagus:⁶

- Reflux can lead to inflammation of the pharynx (part of the throat right behind the mouth) and larynx (voice box).
- It may also cause bronchitis, asthma or pneumonia.

9. How long does the treatment for GERD last?

GERD is usually relieved with the right treatment after a few days. However, it is a chronic condition for many people, and recurrences are not uncommon.³

10. How can you take care of yourself?

If you have GERD, it is important to be aware that symptoms may recur. Avoid habits that have caused symptoms in the past. Eating the correct diet, having a normal weight, and taking your medications as prescribed will be helpful in preventing repeat problems.³

11. When to call the Doctor?⁷



Problems or pain with swallowing



A full feeling after eating a small meal



Choking



Unexplained weight loss



Vomiting



Loss of appetite



Chest pain



Bleeding, blood in your stools, or dark, tarry looking stools



Hoarseness

GERD: Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease

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