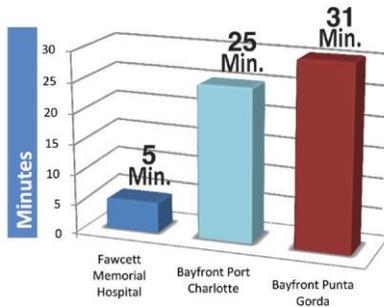


Fawcett Memorial Hospital

Our Family Caring For Yours



ER WAIT TIMES

So, what makes Fawcett Memorial Hospital different?

Our ER Wait Times are consistently lower than the national average and average of other Florida hospitals. Timely and effective care in hospital emergency departments is essential for good patient outcomes. Delays before receiving care in the emergency department can reduce the quality of care and increase risks and discomfort for patients with serious illnesses or injuries.

We work hard every day to improve quality and expand services because we are committed to patient care and nothing's more important than your health.

*Data is sourced from CMS Hospital Compare, four quarters ending 3Q2014.

ACID REFLUX PREVENTION, TREATMENT AND AWARENESS

Have you ever wondered why you get heartburn? Have you ever wondered why your heartburn is worse with certain foods or when you eat late? Well, you are not alone; over 25 million Americans suffer from acid reflux every day.

What causes heartburn? Heartburn, or acid reflux, is due to the acid from your stomach backing into the esophagus. The fluid in your stomach is very acidic with a pH of 1-5-3.5 which is in the same range as lemon juice or vinegar. While this acid helps you digest and breakdown foods, it can be very toxic to the esophagus. A valve called the lower esophageal sphincter (LES) is our body's protection against stomach acid. Normally, the LES remains contracted and closed which prevents the back up or reflux of stomach acid into the esophagus. As we get older the LES can become weaker and is unable to remain closed all of the time. This allows the reflux of stomach acid into the esophagus, which leads to irritation. For some people, this occurs daily.

How do you know if you have gastroesophageal reflux disease or GERD? The most common symptoms are heartburn, indigestion, reflux, and regurgitation of food. Atypical symptoms include chronic dry cough, chronic sore throat, worsening of asthma and difficulty swallowing. People with these uncommon symptoms are often not aware that they actually have acid reflux disease. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, it is important that you be seen by a physician.

What problems are associated with having acid reflux disease? Occasional reflux symptoms are typically not a cause for concern, but showing daily or even weekly acid reflux symptoms results in the



Dr. Maria Castilla, M.D.

repeated exposure of the lower part of your esophagus to this erosive stomach acid. If left untreated, the chronic exposure of stomach acid in the esophagus can lead to a multitude of problems including ulcers, strictures, daily pain or discomfort and difficulties swallowing. It can even lead to changes in the cells lining the esophagus, a syndrome known as Barrett's esophagus. Ten to twenty percent of patients with GERD go on to develop this disease.

How can you prevent acid reflux? There are lifestyle changes and diet changes you can make. Acid reflux is made worse by smoking, being overweight and eating large meals or late meals. Quitting smoking and losing weight can significantly reduce your acid reflux symptoms. Certain foods such as citrus, caffeine, chocolate, tomatoes, fried foods, and alcohol also make acid reflux worse. If avoiding these types of foods is as difficult for you as it is for most Americans, there are medications and surgical options for acid reflux disease. However, it is recommended that you be seen by your physician to determine the cause of your symptoms and whether or not you need to be on a trial of medication. Caution advised, long-term use of acid suppression medication can pose significant health risks, such as increased risk of infections, inability to absorb vital nutrients and increased risk of osteoporosis and osteoporosis associated bone fracture.

For more information on the services offered at Fawcett Memorial Hospital visit www.fawcethospital.com. For a physician referral, or to learn more about Dr. Castilla's practice, call our Consult-a-Nurse service at 941-624-4441.