

Patient Education

Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD)

Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD) often referred to as “indigestion” or “heartburn” occurs when stomach acid flows backwards into the esophagus or food pipe. While the main symptom of GERD is a burning sensation in the chest, it can also present without heartburn and manifest differently in each individual.

- Other symptoms include difficulty swallowing, hoarseness, and coughing.
- Atypical presentations can include Globus, which is the persistent sensation of a lump in the throat.
- A clinical diagnosis can be made with a trial of proton pump inhibitors (PPIs). An endoscopy procedure may be necessary in certain cases.
- Lifestyle and dietary recommendations for GERD are beneficial for improving the esophageal microbiome and preventing further disease as well as rings, webs, or strictures, and hiatal hernias.

Eating on the Road

Restaurants cannot always tell you the ingredients in a recipe and menus do not list every one of them. Ask for an ingredient book if possible or speak with the cook to avoid triggers during an elimination trial.

Water Breaks

Drink fluids between meals to reduce abdominal distention and discomfort. Take medications with a full glass of water while in an upright position well before bedtime. Brush and floss.

The Destination

Homemade meals, fresh ingredients, mostly plant based, whole foods, that are tolerated well. Start with less C.R.A.P foods and more whole foods.

C.R.A.P

An elimination trial of trigger foods to prevent symptoms of GERD

C Coffee, cigarettes, chocolate, caffeinated drinks

R Refined carbohydrates, Rx meds (certain ones)

A Acidic foods, alcohol, allergic foods

P Pop (soda), peppermint, progesterone

Spicy foods, citrus fruits, tomatoes and tomato products due to citric acid, fatty foods, soy, gluten, dairy, and yeast are common triggers.

Avoid or limit these foods to see if it helps, but there is no need to continue if they do not bother you. Each week, try eliminating 1 trigger food at a time for 3 days to check for symptoms.

Reworked from No More Heartburn by Sherry Rogers, MD.

What if you started with a salad a day?

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Esophageal Support

Food. Mindfulness. Movement.



WHAT TO EAT

Fruits & Veggies

NATURE'S TREATS

- Bananas, Melons (non citrus fruit)
- Broccoli, Brussel sprouts, Asparagus, Spinach, Kale, cauliflower
- Sweet Potatoes, Carrots, Beets

Natural sources of fiber and protein! Low in fat and sugar!

Protein Rich Foods

LEAN AND GREEN

- Chicken, Turkey
- Cold water fish: Tuna, Salmon, Halibut, Sardines, Cod
- Tofu, Tempeh
- Hard cheese, Greek yogurt
- Dried beans, Nuts
- Oatmeal, Brown rice
- Green veggies
- Fennel

HOW TO EAT

Slow and Steady

EAT SLOWLY

- Chew food thoroughly. Try to take about 30 minutes for a meal.
- Give your body enough time to feel satisfied. You can pause mid meal to check.
- Sit up while eating and for one or two hours afterward.

On a Schedule

PLAN YOUR MEALS

- Eat smaller, more frequent meals rather than three large ones to prevent increased pressure in the stomach causing reflux.
- Avoid food or liquids for 2-3 hours before bedtime since laying down pushes food against the lower esophageal sphincter (LES).

LIFESTYLE

Enhance Digestion

FOOD HYGEINE

- Smell food while prepared.
- Think about eating.
- Take slow deep abdominal breathes.
- Practice gratefulness before meals.
- Eat in a relaxed environment.
- If you can, try gentle walking for 15 minutes after eating.

Prevent Disease

DAILY HABITS

- Exercise regularly.
- Avoid tight clothing.
- Elevate the head of the bed while sleeping using a phone book or a foam wedge under the mattress.
- Sleep on your left side.
- Eliminate smoking.
- Check out Speech, Language, Pathology services.

Try adding 1 new food or lifestyle change weekly - monthly. Remember to go at your own pace. Think of treating your body as a whole and listening to its signals for guidance. Resources such as grocery store tours, budget shopping, meal prep and deliveries, cooking classes, farmer's markets, food co-ops, homemade recipes, substitutes for C.R.A.P foods, smoking cessation support, gentle bodywork, mindfulness, movement, and breathing exercises are different ways to help start your healing journey!