

# Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD)

---

## What is GERD?

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is a condition where your stomach acid repeatedly backs up into the food pipe connecting your mouth and stomach also called the esophagus. Acid reflux occurs because the circular muscle at the end of the esophagus relaxes at the wrong time and causes acid to back up into the food pipe. Repeated reflux of stomach acid can cause irritation and inflammation in the esophagus lining.

## What are the Symptoms of GERD?

Heartburn, bring up partially digested food or sour liquid in your mouth, hiccups, sore throat, constantly clearing your throat, coughing, hoarseness, trouble swallowing and a sensation of a lump in your throat are all possible symptoms of GERD.

## Foods and Drinks to Avoid:

- Fatty foods
- Alcohol
- Chocolate
- Caffeinated drinks (coffee, tea, soda)
- Tomatoes and Tomato based sauces (marinara, ketchup)
- Spicy foods
- Vinegar
- Citrus Fruits and Juices
- Spearmint
- Peppermint

## Other Anti-Reflux Measures:

- Take your acid medication 30 minutes before your meal.
- Avoid eating or drinking for 2 hours before going to bed or laying down.
- Elevate the head of your bed 6 inches (use a bed wedge from any surgical supply store).
- Avoid wearing tight fitting clothing around your abdomen.
- Avoid straining, weightlifting, prolonged bending, and constipation.
- Lose weight (if you are overweight).
- Avoid large meals, instead eat smaller meals throughout the day.