

Background:

Gastroesophageal reflux, referred to as GERD, is a digestive issue caused when stomach acids get into the esophagus. This can happen after eating upsetting foods, and is often the result of a weakened muscle at the base of the esophagus, the lower esophageal sphincter, the body uses to prevent digestive juices and food from flowing into the esophagus.

Purpose:

The purpose of the GERD diet is to relieve many of the symptoms of GERD including heartburn, coughing, difficulty swallowing, chest pain, excessive clearing of the throat, the feeling that food is stuck in your throat and a sour taste or burning sensation in the mouth. Avoiding digestive stress can often alleviate some of the more uncomfortable or painful aspects of GERD.

Factors That May Contribute to GERD:

- Pregnancy
- Being Overweight
- Alcohol Use
- Smoking
- Medications that delay stomach emptying or increase the backup of acid into the esophagus

Tips for Avoiding GERD Pain:

- Avoid using tobacco products as they can further weaken the esophagus
- Avoid alcohol
- Avoid overeating and eating too quickly
- Avoid lying down or going to bed immediately after eating - wait 3 hours before lying down
- Elevate the head of the bed 6" to 8" by placing blocks under the bedposts or putting a foam wedge under the top part of the mattress to avoid reflux while sleeping
- Eat a low fat diet
- Maintain a healthy weight
- Drink liquids between meals instead of with meals
- Chew gum after meals to help neutralize stomach acid
- Eat in a calm, relaxed place, sit down while you eat
- Exercise at least 3-4 times each week
- Wear loose fitting clothing

GERD & Diet:

Reactions to foods vary greatly between individuals. Removing some foods from the diet may improved GERD and what the on person can tolerate may not be the same as what other can tolerate. Try eliminating all of the following foods to see if symptoms improve. Then try adding them back in one by one to see if some or all are contributing to GERD.

- Fatty or fried foods - oil, butter, mayonnaise, cream sauces, high fat meals, whole milk dairy products, salad dressing, cream soups
- Mint flavorings, peppermint, spearmint, peppermint oil, spearmint oil
- Spicy foods such as chili and curry
- Chocolate
- Citrus fruits and juices (grapefruit, orange, lemon, lime)
- Caffeinated beverages such as tea, coffee, soda
- Desserts
- Raw onion and garlic
- Tomato-based foods such as spaghetti sauce, pizza, chili

If you believe you may be suffering from symptoms of GERD, you need to discuss dietary and medication changes with your physician. Your healthcare provider is the best source of information for questions and concerns related to your health. To find a physician near you, please see our [website](#).

It is important to monitor nutrition when taking acid-blocking medication (PPI's) as over time these medications can lead to nutritional deficiencies. A Registered Dietitian can help assess your diet for nutritional adequacy and recommend a proper nutrition plan when taking these medications. A dietitian can also help address the underlying causes of too much or too little stomach acid and provide nutrition therapy that will help alleviate symptoms. To schedule an appointment with our Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, call **602.422.9800** or [request an appointment online](#).