



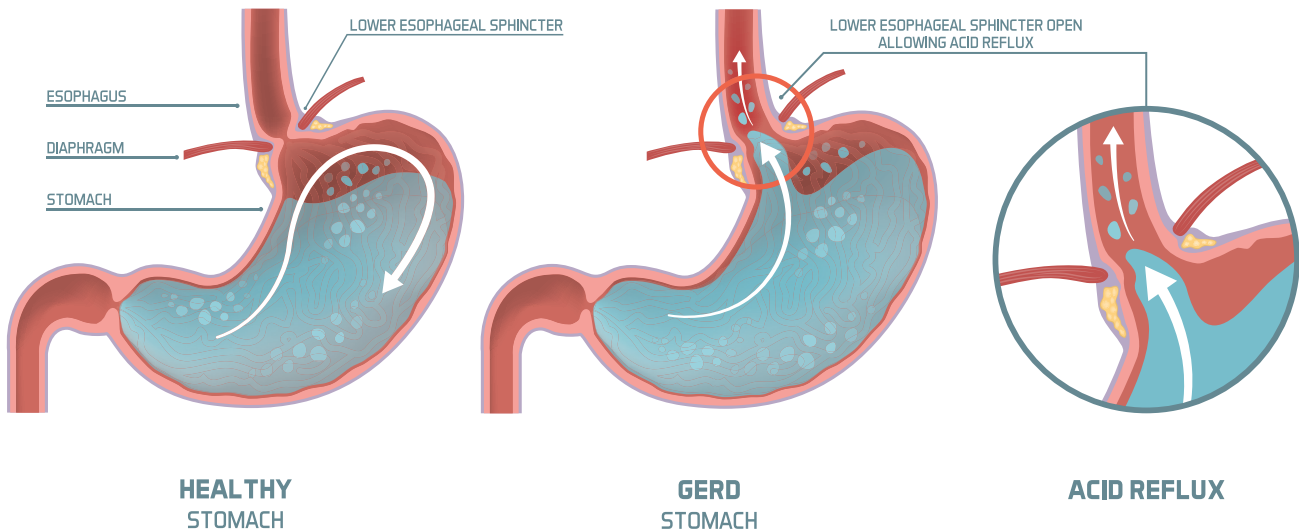
Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD)

What Is GERD?

Gastroesophageal reflux is a chronic disease that occurs when stomach contents flow back (reflux) into the food pipe (esophagus). One of the most common digestive disorders, otherwise known as 'acid reflux', it's usually caused by failure of the muscle valve (called the lower esophageal sphincter) between the stomach and the esophagus to close properly. The backwash of stomach acid irritates the lining of the lower esophagus and causes the symptom of heartburn.



GASTRIC DISEASE



Heartburn, which is the most prevalent symptom of GERD, usually feels like a burning sensation behind the breastbone, moving up to the neck and throat.

What Are the Risks Factors for GERD?

- Pregnancy
- Smoking
- Drinking alcohol
- Being overweight
- Eating certain foods (fatty/fried food, chocolate, mint, garlic, onions, tomato sauce, citrus)
- Drinking certain drinks (juices, carbonated drinks)
- Lying down after a meal

What Are the Warning Signs of GERD?

The most common symptoms of GERD are heartburn or regurgitation. Regurgitation is when liquid or food from the stomach moves from the esophagus into the mouth.

Other symptoms may include:

- Chest pain
- Hoarseness
- Wheezing
- Trouble breathing
- Excess throat mucus and throat clearing
- Chronic cough
- Difficulty swallowing
- Postnasal drip

How Is GERD Diagnosed?

Your doctor will ask questions about your medical history and symptoms. You may be diagnosed with GERD based on that evaluation or by taking medicine to see if your symptoms improve. Your doctor may also need to look within your esophagus. This is done by passing a long, thin tube called an endoscope through your mouth and stomach to learn more about what's going on inside your body.

How Is GERD Treated?

For many patients, lifestyle changes can help improve symptoms. These changes include:

- Avoiding foods or drinks that may cause GERD symptoms
- Not lying down for three hours after meals and raising your head during sleep
- Quitting smoking and avoiding alcohol

Other treatments for GERD include:

- Over-the-counter antacids
- Prescription medicines to lower stomach acid
- Surgery, which may be needed by some people when other treatments do not help

What Are the Trigger Foods That Should Be Avoided?

- Coffee (with or without caffeine) and caffeinated beverages relax the lower esophageal sphincter.
- Citrus fruits and juices such as orange, grapefruit and pineapple have high acid content.
- Tomatoes and processed tomato-based products such as tomato juice, and pasta and pizza sauces are highly acidic.
- Carbonated beverages (fizzy drinks) cause gaseous distension of the stomach (bloating), which increases pressure on the lower esophageal sphincter causing acid reflux.
- Chocolate contains a chemical called methylxanthine from the cocoa tree, which is similar to caffeine. It relaxes the lower esophageal sphincter, which causes acid reflux.
- Peppermint, garlic and onions relax the lower esophageal sphincter causing acid reflux.
- Fatty, spicy or fried foods relax the lower esophageal sphincter as well as delay stomach emptying and therefore cause acid reflux

ACID REFLUX DIET



BAD



GOOD



LESS
FATTY FOOD
AND ALCOHOL



MORE
WHOLE GRAINS
AND FIBERS



COFFEE



WINE



FAST FOOD



SOFT DRINKS



CHOCOLATE



GARLIC



ONION



TOMATOES



CITRUS



PEPPERMINT



SPICES



DAIRY



GINGER



LEAFY GREENS



BROWN RICE



COCONUT



CELERY



BERRIES



MELON



BANANA



FENNEL



AVOCADO



APPLE



PEAR