

Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease and Laryngopharyngeal Reflux

Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD)

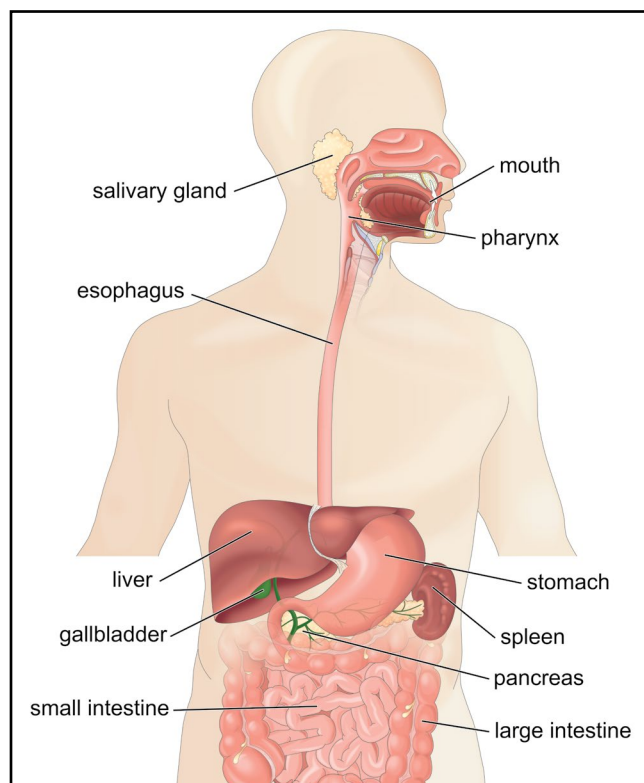
GERD is a disorder that allows food and stomach acid to back up into your esophagus (the tube that connects your mouth to your stomach).

Food normally moves down your esophagus into your stomach, passing through your lower esophageal sphincter, a flap valve that connects your esophagus to your stomach. It opens to let food into your stomach and then closes.

With GERD, the flap valve does not always work right. It may be weak or open at the wrong time.

Causes of GERD

- Certain foods and beverages may weaken the flap valve:
 - chocolate
 - peppermint
 - fried or fatty foods
 - coffee and alcohol.
- Cigarette smoking weakens the flap valve.
- Hormone changes and a growing uterus during pregnancy crowds the intestines and stomach.
- A hiatal hernia causes part of the stomach to move into the chest through a small opening in the diaphragm. This keeps stomach contents above the opening.



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Reflux issues occur when stomach contents go up your esophagus, larynx or pharynx.

Heartburn is a sign of GERD

Heartburn (or acid indigestion) is the most common sign of GERD. It causes:

- a burning feeling starting behind your breastbone and moving up toward your throat. It often starts after eating and can last as long as 2 hours.
- a feeling that food is coming back into your throat or even back into your mouth
- an acidic or bitter taste in your mouth.

Heartburn may also start if you lie down or bend over after eating.

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Treating GERD

You can treat GERD by:

- avoiding foods and beverages that can weaken the flap valve (see the list under “Causes of GERD”)
- avoiding foods and beverages that can irritate a damaged esophagus: citrus fruits and juices, tomato products and spicy foods
- eating smaller meals
- eating or drinking your last food or beverage at least 2 to 3 hours before bed (Small sips of water are OK.)
- losing weight if you are overweight
- raising the head of your bed 6 inches
- taking over-the-counter antacids on a regular basis
- taking prescription medicine your health care provider prescribes.

Laryngopharyngeal Reflux (LPR)

LPR is a condition that can be caused by GERD. It happens when stomach acid goes back into your esophagus and up to your throat (pharynx) and voice box (larynx).

It does not cause heartburn, but can cause symptoms such as:

- sore or dry throat
- hoarseness
- coughing or clearing your throat a lot
- the feeling of a lump in your throat or that something is stuck in the back of your throat
- problems swallowing
- bitter or acidic taste in your mouth.

LPR is sometimes known as “throat burn reflux” or “silent reflux.”

Treating LPR

You can treat LPR by:

- not smoking
- raising the head of your bed at least 6 inches
- eating your last food or beverage at least 2 to 3 hours before bedtime
- losing weight if you are overweight
- taking prescription medicine your health care provider prescribes
- trying yoga, deep breathing, mindfulness meditation, keeping a journal, or other activity to lower your stress.

Foods to avoid for 4 to 6 weeks

Do not have any of these foods for 4 to 6 weeks:

- carbonated (fizzy) beverages
- caffeine (coffee, black tea, soft drinks and energy drinks)
- alcohol
- onions, garlic and peppers
- citrus juices (such as orange, grapefruit, lemonade)
- chocolate
- mint and menthol
- spicy foods and hot sauce
- tomato-based foods (including salsa)
- highly processed or fatty foods (such as fast foods, greasy foods and high-fat snacks).

After the 4 to 6 weeks, start eating 1 of the foods or beverages from the list every 3 to 4 days. Write down how you feel after eating.

You will have a list of foods that bother you. There is no need to avoid them forever. You can choose when to eat them to manage your symptoms as needed.