



UPPER GI DISEASES

Volume 2, Issue 12

March, 2009

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GERD



UNTREATED GERD COMPLICATIONS

- Ulcers
- Strictures
- Barrett's esophagus
- Cough & asthma
- Inflammation of throat & larynx
- Inflammation & infection of the lungs
- Fluid in sinuses & middle ear

Gastro esophageal reflux disease, commonly referred to as GERD or acid reflux, is a condition in which the liquid content of the stomach backs up into the esophagus.

Your stomach is filled with acid. Its purpose is to help digest the food you eat. Believe it or not, this acid is the same acidity as battery acid. Your stomach is made to handle the acid it produces. However, your esophagus isn't. The constant backwash can irritate the lining of your esophagus and cause heartburn. If your heartburn occurs two or more days a week for at least three months, you may have GERD.

The cause of GERD is complex. Normally when you swallow your food, it travels down the food pipe

(esophagus) to a valve that opens to let the food pass into the stomach, then closes. With GERD, the valve does not close tightly enough. Stomach acid and juices flow from the stomach and back up the esophagus.

Heartburn is the most common symptom of GERD. However, you may also experience the following:

- Sour or bitter taste
- Bitter stomach fluid coming into the mouth, especially during sleep
- Hoarseness
- A need to clear your throat
- Difficulty swallowing food or liquid
- Wheezing or coughing at

night

- Worsening of symptoms after eating, or when bending over or lying down.

Often life changes are all that is needed to correct mild forms of GERD. When symptoms are moderate to severe, your doctor will prescribe medication. These may include Tagamet, Zantac, Pepcid or Axid. Newer drugs for more severe cases include Prilosec or Prevacid. Some people may need to be treated with surgery to tighten the valve.

GERD is a common problem that requires you to work together with your physician for a successful method of treatment.

INCREASES RISK OF GERD

- Obesity
- Hiatal hernia
- Pregnancy
- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Peptic ulcer
- Delayed stomach emptying
- Connective tissue disorders

LIFESTYLE CHANGES

Many people with GERD have it for a lifetime. Making certain lifestyle changes can help along with the medicine your doctor has prescribed.

The following changes have been shown to have a positive effect on symptoms:

- Losing weight
- Quitting smoking

- Wearing loose fitting clothing
- Eating smaller meals
- Raising the head of the bed when sleeping
- Waiting at least 3 hours before lying down after eating
- Avoid certain foods including:

- Chocolate
- Peppermint
- Alcohol
- Caffeine drinks
- Citrus drinks
- Tomato based foods
- High fat and/or fried foods

