



GASTRIC REFLUX

Self- Care at Home

Many people can relieve their symptoms by changing their habits and lifestyle. The following steps, if followed, may reduce your reflux significantly.

Don't eat within 3 hours of bedtime. This allows your stomach to empty and acid production to decrease. If you don't eat, your body isn't making acid to digest the food.

Similarly, do not lie down right after eating at any time of the day.

Elevate the head of your bed 6 inches with blocks. Gravity helps prevent reflux.

Don't eat large meals. Eating a lot of food at one time increases the amount of acid needed to digest it. Eat smaller, more frequent meals throughout the day.

Avoid fatty or greasy foods, chocolate, caffeine, mints or mint-flavored foods, spicy foods, citrus and tomato-based foods. These foods decrease the competence of the LES (lower esophageal sphincter).

Avoid drinking alcohol. Alcohol increases the likelihood that acid from your stomach will back up.

Stop smoking. Smoking weakens the lower esophageal sphincter and increases reflux.

Lose excess weight. Overweight and obese people are much more likely to have bothersome reflux than people of healthy weight.

Stand upright or sit up straight, maintain good posture. This helps food and acid pass through the stomach instead of backing up into the esophagus.

Talk to your health care provider about taking over-the-counter pain relievers such as aspirin, ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) or medicines for osteoporosis. These can aggravate reflux in some people.

Some of these changes may be difficult for people to make. Talk to your health care provider if you need some tips on losing weight or quitting smoking. Knowing that your heartburn will get better may keep you motivated.