



Gastroesophageal Reflux

What is gastroesophageal reflux?

Gastroesophageal reflux disease or GERD is a condition in which stomach acid comes up into your esophagus or throat and causes a wide variety of symptoms.

What are the symptoms of GERD?

GERD is the great pretender and often presents with a wide variety of symptoms. Many of these are seemingly unrelated to the stomach or may suggest more worrisome diseases. Some of the more common ones are:

- Heartburn
- Regurgitation or sour taste in the mouth
- Postnasal drip
- Chest discomfort, which worsens upon lying or bending over
- Globus sensation, the feeling that something is stuck the back of your throat
- Pain or difficulty swallowing
- Cough
- Laryngitis or hoarseness
- Thick mucous

But I don't have heartburn...

Many people have GERD without the sensation of heartburn. In fact nearly 50% of all GERD sufferers have never reported having heartburn symptoms.

What can be done?

In many cases the symptom of GERD can be reduced or resolved by making some simple lifestyle changes.

- Quit smoking. Nicotine stimulates acid production in the stomach.
- Eat smaller, more frequent meals.
- Eat a healthy diet. Avoid excess caffeine, alcohol, and fatty foods.
- Lose excess weight.
- Avoid tight-fitting clothes.
- Don't eat for 2-3 hours prior to going to bed.
- Avoid caffeine.
- Elevate the head of your bed.

I made all the changes and I'm still having problems?

If symptoms persist consult your doctor. There are other treatment methods that may help. Medication is commonly prescribed. Surgery is indicated in only the worst cases.