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Heartburn and Reflux (GERD)

Gastroesophageal reflux disease or “GERD” is a chronic digestive disease. When stomach acid or, occasionally, stomach content flows back into the esophagus (food pipe), the backwash irritates the lining of your esophagus and causes GERD. The contents come back up because the lower sphincter opens spontaneously or doesn’t close properly.

This acid reflux may cause people to experience indigestion, a taste of food in the mouth, or a burning sensation in the chest, chest pain or pain in your throat. It can also cause dry cough, wheezing, trouble swallowing, hoarseness, or a sensation of a lump in your throat.

Notice: If you experience chest pain with other signs of shortness of breath, jaw or arm pain, seek immediate medical assistance; you may be experiencing a heart attack.

Occasional acid reflux is a very common problem, but those who suffer from reflux more than twice a week may have gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), that can lead to serious health problems.

What conditions can increase a risk of GERD?

Obesity, a bulging of the top of the stomach into the diaphragm (hiatal hernia), pregnancy, smoking, dry mouth, asthma, diabetes, a delayed stomach emptying, and connective tissue disorders.

What are my treatment options for GERD?

Treatment of GERD may include over the counter reflux medication, lifestyle changes that include low-acid diet, and prescription medication to block the production of acid.

If lifestyle changes and medications do not help treat your symptoms, your health care provider may suggest an Upper Endoscopy or other procedure to examine your esophagus for abnormalities. In some cases, surgery may be warranted to treat certain conditions.