

## **GASTROESOPHAGEAL REFLUX DISEASE**

Also known as heart burn or indigestion, Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD) is a condition in which stomach acid comes back up through the esophagus into the throat. It may cause a sore throat, a feeling of a lump in the throat, hoarseness or a nighttime cough. It occurs when the muscular junction between the stomach and the esophagus relaxes too much.

The treatment for GERD is with medication and changes in diet.

Medication for GERD acts to decrease acid production in the stomach. Examples include Prilosec, Prevacid, Zantac & Pepcid.

Changes in diet help to keep the junction between the stomach and the esophagus closed. The best diet for your evening meal is protein (fish, chicken, meat & eggs) and green, yellow or orange vegetables and fruit. It is best to avoid fatty foods and starches (potatoes, bread, pasta and rice) because these foods tend to open the stomach-esophagus junction.

It is important to limit caffeine (coffee, tea & coke) use during the evening and night. Caffeine also opens the stomach-esophagus junction.

It is also important to reduce all food consumption three hours before lying down.

Finally, when sleeping, it will help if the head of your bed is elevated by placing 1 brick under each of the two legs at the head of the bed. This provides a gentle slope to the bed, which will keep the stomach acid down in the stomach.

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