



Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease

MU Patient Education Series

Definition:

GERD is a chronic digestive disease that occurs when stomach acid or, occasionally, bile flows back (refluxes) into your food pipe (esophagus). The backwash of acid irritates the lining of your esophagus and causes GERD signs and symptoms.

GERD signs and symptoms include acid reflux and heartburn. These are common digestive conditions that many people experience occasionally. When these signs and symptoms occur at least twice each week or interfere with your daily life, doctors call this GERD.

SIGNS/SYMPTOMS:

- Acid reflux – regurgitation of food or sour liquid
- Heartburn – burning sensation in your chest (heartburn) may spread to the throat, along with a sour taste in your mouth
- Difficulty swallowing
- Chest pain
- Dry cough
- Hoarseness or sore throat
- Sensation of a lump in the throat
- Bleeding

TESTS TO DIAGNOSE GERD:

X-Ray studies

- Endoscopy (camera used to look inside an area)
- Fluoroscopy (dye is swallowed and a continuous x ray is taken)
- Individual symptoms



APPROACHES TO TREATING GERD INCLUDE:

- Lifestyle changes
- Nutrition and exercise
- Herbal medicine
- Medications
- Mind-body therapy
- Traditional Chinese medicine
- Surgery

LIFESTYLE CHANGES:

- Control symptoms
- Low-fat high protein diet
- Eat small meals
- Avoid triggers
- Weight loss
- Raise head of bed
- Drink fluids between meals rather than with meals
- Avoid smoking and alcohol
- Wear loose fitting clothing
- Don't lie down immediately after a meal

*****Seek immediate medical attention if you experience chest pain, especially when it appears with other signs and symptoms, such as shortness of breath, jaw or arm pain.**

DISCLAIMER:

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