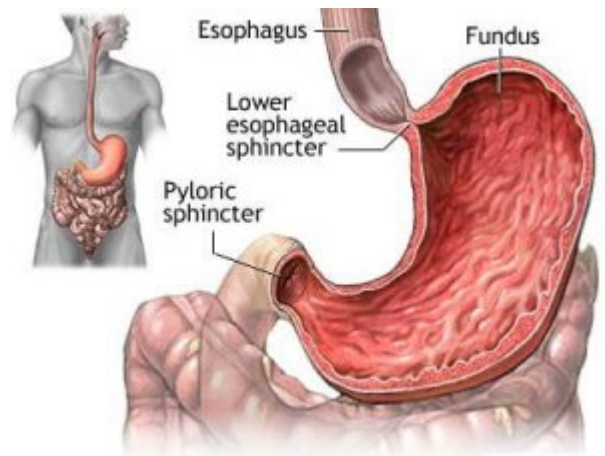


# Acid Reflux

In some people, irritating acid stomach juices may leak out of the stomach and into the esophagus and throat. This can cause irritation and muscle spasm in the throat, in addition to typical "heartburn". Some of the symptoms include: cough, sore throat, burning, hoarseness, excessive throat clearing, excessive mucous or post-nasal drip, bad aftertaste, or a sensation of a lump in the throat.

It is important to realize that throat symptoms can occur in the absence of typical "heartburn", or can occur secondary to acid reflux only present during night.

The following instructions are designed to help prevent acid from coming up the esophagus, reduce the production of acid and neutralize it. You should use as many of these as needed to get relief. If these measures do not help, or your symptoms get worse, please inform your doctor.



Avoid lying down after meals.

Do not eat for 3 or 4 hours before going to bed.

For night-time relief, sleep with the head of your bed elevated since symptoms are more likely to occur if you lie flat. The best way to achieve elevation is to place cinder blocks, wood, or bricks under the legs of the head of the bed. The desired elevation is approximately 8 inches. Another alternative is to purchase a large foam wedge to elevate the head and shoulders.

If you are overweight, consider diet and exercise.

Take an antacid; **H2Blockers** – Cimetidine (Tagamet), Ranitidine (Zantac), Famotidine (Pepcid) before meals once or twice a day, or **acid neutralizers** such as Maalox and Mylanta as needed

Clothing that fits tightly across the mid-section of the body should be avoided. Women should not wear a girdle. Men should not wear a tight-fitting belt, but should preferably use suspenders instead. Use of "abdominal supporting" belts should be avoided.

Prolonged periods of bending or stooping may aggravate reflux. This includes activities such as gardening and exercises requiring lifting or bending.

Diet restrictions can help control symptoms. A bland diet divided into multiple small feedings is recommended. You should moderate highly seasoned foods, fatty foods, and acidic foods such as citrus and tomato. Care should be taken to chew food properly to aid in digestion. Alcohol, tobacco, and coffee are known irritants to the esophagus and stomach and should be avoided. Alcohol and coffee stimulate stomach secretions but do not help to neutralize the acid. Foods or candy containing peppermint or spearmint tend to relax the sphincter between the stomach and esophagus, and may worsen symptoms.

If needed, your doctor may prescribe a more effective medicine known as a **PPI**, such as Prilosec, Protonix, Aciphex, Prevacid or Nexium to use as directed.