

# Gastroesophageal Reflux - Dietary Instructions

- **DIETARY INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONTROL OF GASTROESOPHAGEAL REFLUX**
- In some people, irritating stomach acid may leak out (reflux) from the stomach and into the esophagus and throat. This may cause many symptoms secondary to irritation and muscle spasm in the throat. Some of the symptoms that people have from this include: cough, burning or soreness in the throat, hoarseness, a sensation of excessive mucus in the throat or mouth, a sensation of a lump in the throat or the need to clear the throat, a bad taste in the mouth, ear pain, burning in the mid-chest or stomach, indigestion, or belching.
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- The following instructions are designed to help relieve these symptoms by controlling the degree of acid reflux, neutralizing the stomach acid, and reducing the production of stomach acid. If these measures do not help, or if your symptoms worsen, you should contact your physician. Reflux and its symptoms may be periodic and may recur, so keep these instructions available should your symptoms recur at a later date.
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- Take an antacid in liquid form (Gelusilâ , Maaloxâ , Gavisconâ , or others of your choice) 20 to 30 minutes after meals and at bedtime. Liquid antacids seem to be better than tablets. Many adults require 1 to 3 tablespoons.
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- If you are overweight, you should lose weight.
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- Diet restrictions help control symptoms. A bland diet and multiple feedings are recommended. You should avoid highly seasoned food that is either very hot or very cold. Care should be taken to eat slowly and chew food properly.
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- Alcohol, tobacco, and caffeine are irritants to the esophagus and stomach and should be avoided. Alcohol and coffee also stimulate stomach acid secretions.
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- Do not eat for 3 hours before bedtime.
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- For nighttime 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 of the head of your bed is to place cinder blocks, wood, or bricks under the legs of the head of the bed. The desired elevation range is from 4 to 11 inches, with 8

inches being a customary average. Sometimes, sleeping on the right side prevents distressing attacks.

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- Clothing that fits tightly across the mid-section of the body should be avoided.
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- Attempt to avoid recurrent throat clearing. With reflux, this can become habitual and is harmful to the larynx.