

Associates in Ear, Nose, Throat & Facial Plastic Surgery, PA

**Facial Plastic and Cosmetic Surgery • Electronystagmography
Head and Neck Surgery • Pediatric Otolaryngology**

REFLUX ESOPHAGITIS

Reflux esophagitis is an inflammation of the lower end of the esophagus, or food tube. It happens when food and digestive acids rise up out of the stomach and enter the esophagus. This causes burning of the lining of the esophagus. The acid can reflux up the entire esophagus into the throat and larynx (voice box). Although the stomach lining is protected from acid, the esophagus, throat, and larynx are not. This reflux of acid can cause the common symptom of heartburn. It also can result in voice loss or a feeling of a lump in the throat or a burning sensation in the throat.

Stomach contents can rise up, or reflux, for different reasons. It can happen if you have eaten too much and occurs more often when lying down. It can also happen if the muscle at the top of the stomach is weak or if the top of the stomach protrudes above the diaphragm. This is referred to as a Hiatal hernia. Many people have occasional heartburn, but some people suffer almost constantly causing the inflammation known as reflux esophagitis.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR DIGESTIVE TRACT

Although reflux esophagitis may reoccur, you may be able to reduce the chance of reoccurrence by following simple lifestyle changes.

DIET

There is no evidence that diet, by itself, causes or prevents the healing of reflux esophagitis. All foods cause the stomach to produce acid. The effectiveness of avoiding the foods that cause symptoms varies from person to person. So you should particularly avoid foods and beverages that aggravate your symptoms.

TO MINIMIZE PAIN AND DISCOMFORT, AVOID:

1. Orange, grapefruit, and tomato juices
2. Fried or fatty foods
3. Heavy seasonings or spicy foods
4. Alcohol
5. Coffee, tea, or colas and other carbonated drinks
6. Chocolate
7. Peppermint and spearmint

DRUGS

DO NOT USE DRUGS SUCH AS:

The following drugs may increase esophagitis: Aspirin, Ibuprofen, and Naprosyn. These medicines, called nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, reduce the stomach's ability to protect itself from the harmful effects of acid.

Also, the following drugs may contribute to your reflux esophagitis symptoms:

1. Theophylline
2. Calcium channel blockers (Calan, Cardizem, Procardia, Norvasc, etc.)
3. Progesterone
4. Antianxiety agents (Valium, Diazepam, Xanax, etc.)
5. Cholinergic antagonists

LIFESTYLE CHANGES

TO ENCOURAGE HEALING:

1. Do not smoke
2. Weight loss: overeating and excessive weight may contribute to reflux esophagitis
3. Eat small, well-balanced meals
4. Avoid eating three hours before bedtime
5. Elevate the head of your bed six to eight inches higher than the foot of your bed to help reduce reflux at night