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management of gastro-esophageal reflux disease

what is it? Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD) is a condition which causes acid or gas in the stomach to reflux or “backup” into the esophagus. Esophageal pain and heartburn are symptoms of this condition.

why it happens...A tight closure at the base of the esophagus usually protects the esophagus from stomach acid. People with chronic GERD have a weak closure. (GERD can be associated with a hiatal hernia.) By making simple changes in your eating habits, you may help prevent reflux of the stomach acid or gas and minimize heartburn.



What you can do to relieve symptoms...

Eat slowly and chew food thoroughly.

- Eating fast weakens the normal closure of the esophagus.
- Avoid fried or fatty foods, because fat delays the emptying of the stomach.

Drink fluids between meals...

Instead of with meals.

If you are overweight, lose weight.

Weight loss frequently relieves the symptoms of GERD.

Avoid tight fitting clothes.

Avoid these stimulants:

They cause gastric acid production which irritates the esophagus.

- Cigarette smoking
- Regular coffee
- Decaffeinated coffee
- Cocoa
- Tea
- Caffeine-containing soft drinks (i.e., cola, Mountain Dew®)
- Alcohol

Avoid any foods which cause you discomfort.

Some people experience a bloated feeling due to intestinal acid production. Raw onions, raw cabbage, cucumbers, peppermint and spearmint may cause excessive gas. Tomato juice, other tomato products, or citrus fruits and juices, may also cause discomfort. (Note: If you have eliminated citrus fruits and tomatoes from your diet, discuss other sources of vitamin C with your dietitian.)