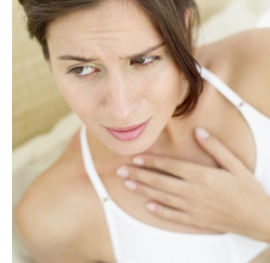


Facts About Heartburn and Acid Reflux Disease



What is Heartburn?

Heartburn is an irritation caused by stomach acid seeping into the esophagus. A muscular valve, called the lower esophageal sphincter or LES, keeps stomach acid in the stomach. Its main function is to open and allow food to enter the stomach or air to escape, then to close again. If the LES opens too frequently or does not close tight enough, this is when stomach acid seeps back into the esophagus. Heartburn is a daily episode for about 10% of Americans, and up to 50% for pregnant women. 30% of the population experience heartburn occasionally.

What is Acid Reflux Disease?

If you experience heartburn symptoms more than twice a week, you have acid reflux disease also known as gastroesophageal reflux disease-GERD.

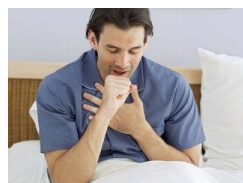
What are the risk factors for Acid Reflux Disease?

1. Eating large meals or lying down right after a meal
2. Being overweight or obese
3. Snacking close to bedtime
4. Eating certain foods, such as citrus, tomato, chocolate, onions, spicy, or fatty foods
5. Drinking certain beverages, such as alcohol, carbonated drinks, coffee, or tea
6. Smoking
7. Being pregnant



What are common symptoms of Acid Reflux Disease?

1. Heartburn
2. Regurgitation – a sour or bitter taste in your mouth
3. Bloating
4. Burping
5. Dysphagia – a narrowing of the esophagus, which gives the sensation of food stuck in your throat
6. Hiccups that will not stop
7. Nausea
8. Vomiting
9. Weight loss for no apparent reason
10. Wheezing, dry cough, or chronic sore throat



How can you treat Acid Reflux Disease with diet and lifestyle changes?

1. Eat smaller meals more frequently, and stop eating before you get too full.
2. Avoid foods and beverages that seem to trigger your heartburn or make it worse.
3. Quit smoking.
4. Elevate the head of your bed at least 4 to 6 inches, which helps to keep stomach contents down.
5. Stop eating at least 2 to 3 hours before lying down.
6. Do not wear tight clothing or belts.
7. Take steps to lose weight.
8. Wait at least 2 hours after a meal to exercise.
9. Drink more water.
10. Keep a diary or heartburn log.

