

Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease

Each person has specific toxic exposures along with dietary and genetic weaknesses that are causing their symptoms. Toxic exposures can be inorganic like heavy metals, DDT, VOC's, Radio-active waste and any other chemical like food additives or pesticides and fertilizers sprayed on the foods. They can also be organic or living organisms like parasites, bacteria, viruses, or fungi. All the different possible combinations make it difficult to accurately address issues unless you have experienced medical professionals mapping through all your different clinical symptoms.

Dr. Marilyn Tucker founded The Vibrant Health Community to do Symptom Mapping to be able to bring a completely personalized plan for each person. When you join the Vibrant Health Community you have your own medical team of doctor, pharmacist and health coach. This Team specializes in Integrative-Complementary Medicine. They will work with your personal physician to bring you to a place of as much natural healing as your body will allow. For those of you that have health issues that require prescription medications, your Team can help introduce natural measures that can reduce the imbalances and complications that inevitably come with prescription medication. This can reduce side effects and possible additional drugs having to be introduced.

Definition

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is a condition in which food or liquid travels backwards from the stomach to the esophagus (the tube from the mouth to the stomach). This action can irritate the esophagus, causing heartburn and other symptoms.

Alternative Names

Peptic esophagitis; Reflux esophagitis; GERD; Heartburn - chronic

Causes, incidence, and risk factors

Gastroesophageal reflux is a common condition that often occurs without symptoms after meals. In some people, the reflux is related to a problem with the lower esophageal sphincter, a band of muscle fibers that usually closes off the esophagus from the stomach. If this sphincter doesn't close properly, food and liquid can move backward into the esophagus and may cause the symptoms.

The risk factors for reflux include hiatal hernia, pregnancy, and scleroderma.

Symptoms

- Heartburn
 - Involves a burning pain in the chest (under the breastbone)
 - Increased by bending, stooping, lying down, or eating
 - Relieved by antacids
 - More frequent or worse at night
- Belching
- Regurgitation of food
- Nausea and vomiting
- Vomiting blood
- Hoarseness or change in voice
- Sore throat
- Difficulty swallowing
- Cough or wheezing

Signs and tests

- A positive stool guaiac
- Continuous esophageal pH monitoring showing reflux
- Endoscopy showing ulceration or inflammation of the esophagus
- Esophageal manometry showing abnormal sphincter pressure
- A barium swallow showing reflux

- A positive Bernstein test for gastric acid reflux

Treatment

General measures include:

- Weight reduction
- Avoiding lying down after meals
- Sleeping with the head of the bed elevated
- Taking medication with plenty of water
- Avoiding dietary fat, chocolate, caffeine, peppermint (they may cause lower esophageal pressure)
- Avoiding alcohol and tobacco

Medications that alleviate symptoms include:

- Antacids after meals and at bedtime
- Histamine H2 receptor blockers
- Proton pump inhibitors

Anti-reflux operations (Nissen fundoplication) may help a small number of patients who have persistent symptoms despite medical treatment. There are also new therapies that can be performed through an endoscope (a flexible tube passed through the mouth into the stomach) for reflux.

Expectations (prognosis)

The majority of people respond to nonsurgical measures with behavioral modification and medications.

Complications

- Inflammation of the esophagus
- Stricture
- Esophageal ulcer
- Hoarseness, bronchospasm
- Chronic pulmonary disease
- Barrett's esophagus (a change in the lining of the esophagus that can increase the risk of cancer)

Prevention

Avoid foods and activities that worsen symptoms. Maintain a healthy weight.