



GASTROESOPHAGEAL REFLUX (GERD)

- This is a condition where food and acid in the stomach move back up into the esophagus (the tube carrying food from your mouth to your stomach).
- Symptoms of GERD can include:
 - Heartburn/indigestion
 - A sour taste in the back of the mouth
 - A burning pain or sensation in the chest
 - A frequent cough or hoarseness
 - Symptoms may get worse right after eating or when you lie down
- Treatments include over-the-counter antacids, prescription drugs that slow acid production, and/or medicines that help your stomach empty out quicker after meals.
- If your symptoms are severe or don't get better with standard treatments, you may be referred to a specialist (Gastroenterologist) for further evaluation. They may need to look down your throat and into your stomach with a special camera.
- **WHAT ELSE WILL HELP?**
 - Don't lie down or exercise for at least 2 hours after eating
 - Avoid foods that cause/worsen symptoms, such as citrus foods, spicy foods, chocolate, onions, tomatoes, carbonated drinks, and mint
 - Avoid wearing clothes that have tight waistlines
 - Eat smaller meals
 - Quit smoking
 - If you are overweight, weight loss can help your symptoms by reducing pressure on your stomach
 - If you have severe nighttime symptoms, elevating the head of your bed can help (raise it up on cement blocks or something similar)
- It is important to treat your GERD to prevent long-term damage and scarring of your esophagus. You are also at higher risk of developing ulcers or bleeding in the stomach.

Call your provider or to the ER right away if you start vomiting blood (or a substance that looks like coffee grounds), or passing bloody or black/tarry stools.