



December's Topic: Acid Reflux Disease

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HEALTHCARE CLINIC HOURS:

Monday-Wednesday, Friday

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Thursday

9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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PHARMACY HOURS:

Monday-Wednesday, Friday

7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

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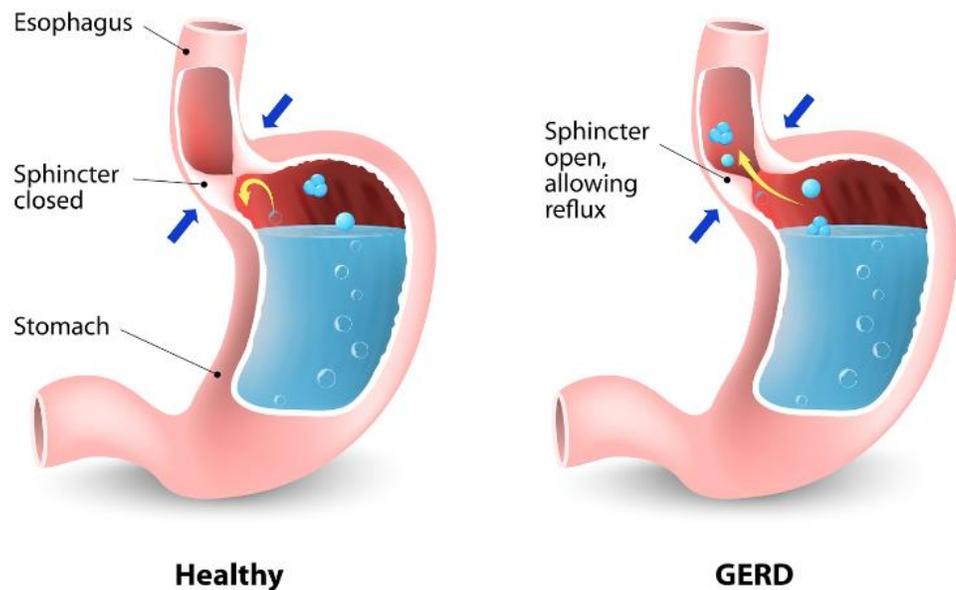
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What is Acid Reflux Disease?

Acid reflux disease, also known as **gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)**, is a chronic condition in which acid and stomach contents flow back into the esophagus, or food pipe, leading to troublesome symptoms. This occurs when the muscular sphincter that normally closes off the stomach, becomes weakened and does not close properly.



Signs and Symptoms of Reflux

Typical:

- Heartburn or indigestion
- Regurgitation (wet burp) followed by sour taste
- Chest pain
- Bloating or abdominal discomfort

Atypical: requires doctor evaluation

- Hoarseness
- Laryngitis
- Persistent cough or throat clearing
- Destruction of tooth enamel

Alarm: seek urgent medical attention

- Dysphagia or difficulty swallowing
- Odynophagia or painful swallowing
- Bleeding
- Unintended weight loss

Long-term GERD may cause:

- Inflammation of the esophagus that could lead to damage
- Narrowing of the esophagus
- Esophageal ulcers
- Precancerous changes to the esophagus

Did You Know?

Nearly 20 % of Americans suffer from GERD.

- 60 million report heart burn at least once a month, and 15 million experience heartburn daily
- 64.6 million prescriptions were written in 2004
- 8.9 million ambulatory care visits were made in 2009
- 4.7 million hospitalizations occurred in 2010

Risk Factors for Developing GERD:

- Obesity
- Pregnancy
- Smoking
- Dry mouth
- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Delayed stomach emptying (gastroparesis)
- Connective tissue disorder
- Hiatal hernia

Diagnosis

GERD is usually suspected based off typical symptoms and complaints. However, there are many diagnostic exams which can be used to confirm GERD:

- Upper GI series X-rays
- Endoscopy
- Esophageal 24-hr monitoring
- Manometry

Treatment Options for GERD

Over the Counter (OTC) Treatment

- **Antacids:**
 - Includes Tums, Gaviscon, Maalox, Mylanta, etc.
 - Neutralizes gastric acid.
 - Effective for immediate relief.
 - Take after meals as needed.
 - **Do not take longer than 14 days; see physician if symptoms persist or worsen.**
- **Histamine-2 Receptor Antagonists (H2RA):**
 - Includes cimetidine (Tagamet), famotidine (Pepcid), nizatidine (Axid), ranitidine (Zantac), etc.
 - Blocks histamine to reduce acid production in the stomach.
 - Provides longer duration of relief than antacids.
 - Effective for mild symptoms occurring less than two times a week.
 - Take 30 to 60 minutes prior to eating foods or drinking beverages that cause heartburn; up to twice daily, as needed.
 - **Do not take OTC H2RA longer than 14 days; see physician if symptoms persist or worsen.**
- **Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPI):**
 - Includes omeprazole (Prilosec), lansoprazole (Prevacid), esomeprazole (Nexium), pantoprazole (Protonix), etc.
 - Blocks the final step in gastric acid production in the stomach.
 - Provides the fastest and most complete relief.
 - Effective for moderate to severe symptoms occurring more than two times a week.
 - Use the lowest effective dose and take 30 to 60 minutes prior to breakfast or largest meal; for daily use (not to be taken as needed).
 - **Do not take OTC PPI longer than 14 days; may repeat 14 days of therapy every 4 months; see physician if symptoms persist or worsen.**



Prescription (Rx) Treatment

H2RAs and PPIs may also be prescribed by your doctor. These can be a different brand, strength, or delivery method (capsule, powder) than what you would see over-the-counter.

- Under the supervision of a doctor, prescription reflux medication may be taken for a longer duration of time in the treatment of symptomatic GERD, esophagitis (inflammation of the esophagus), or ulcers.
- **Do not take any therapy longer than prescribed, and do not discontinue medication without consulting a doctor first.**

Risks of Using Proton Pump Inhibitors

Studies have shown links between long-term PPI use and an increased risk for the following:

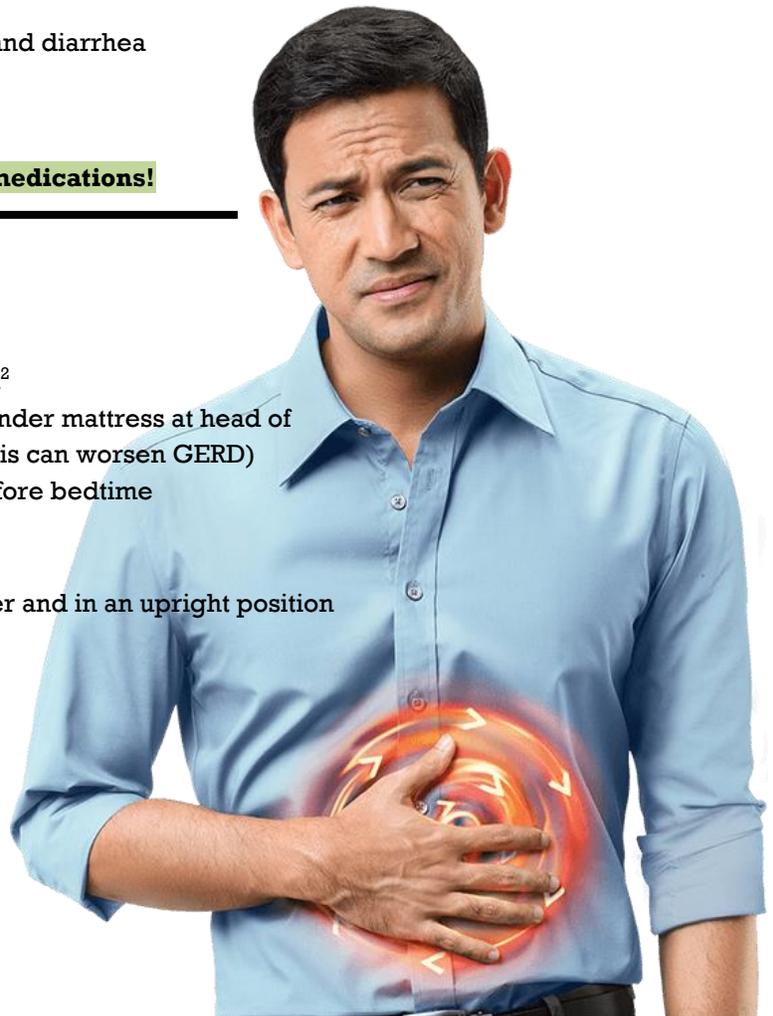
- Hip fractures and osteoporosis
- Community acquired pneumonia
- Clostridium difficile (C. diff) intestinal infection and diarrhea
- Decreased iron and vitamin B12 absorption
- Kidney disease

Ask your doctor about the risks associated with PPI medications!

Managing Acid Reflux

Non-drug Recommendations:

- Weight loss for patients with a BMI over 25 kg/m²
- Elevate bed by placing a 6-8 inch foam wedge under mattress at head of bed, but avoid using pillows to prop body up (this can worsen GERD)
- Eat smaller meals and avoid eating 2-3 hours before bedtime
- Avoid wearing tight fitting clothes
- Reduce cigarette smoking
- Take the following medicines with plenty of water and in an upright position
 - Progesterone/estrogen hormones
 - Tetracycline antibiotics
- Eliminate trigger foods
 - High fat foods
 - Caffeine (coffee, tea, cola)
 - Chocolate
 - Garlic, onions
 - Mint
 - Acidic juices (orange, tomato)
 - Spicy foods
 - Alcohol
- Keep a log or diary of what foods you ate when experiencing heartburn, so you know what foods to avoid



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SEIB and Local Government employees along with SEIB retirees are able to use the State Wellness Center Pharmacy. The pharmacy offers various over the counter products at discounted prices and a **free medication delivery service**. Delivery can be provided to the patients located in Montgomery. Please designate which site you would like your medication delivered to, and if it is to your residence someone must be available at the home to receive the delivery.

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- Check health progress between appointments
- Share information with your physician
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- Evaluate out of pocket medication expense
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- Diabetes education program
- Immunizations & injectable medications
- Develop a personalized medication plan
- Monitor control of chronic illnesses
- Medication check-ups
- Medication therapy management