



GERD

(gastroesophageal reflux disease)

WHAT IS IT?

Symptoms (heartburn, regurgitation, or both) that occur as a result of the reflux of stomach contents into the esophagus or beyond. This occurs due to increased pressure in the stomach and/or relaxation of the lower esophageal sphincter (LES), a muscle located between the esophagus and the stomach that normally contracts to keep stomach acid and other contents in the stomach.

GENTLE NUTRITION SUGGESTIONS

follow as you are able to

- Some common triggers for reflux symptoms are caffeine, alcohol, spicy foods, fried foods, highly acidic foods (citrus juice, tomatoes), carbonated beverages, and carminatives (peppermint, spearmint). These foods may or may not trigger symptoms for you, and it may depend on the amount you consume. Experimentation will help you figure out what works for your body
- Some people find that smaller, more frequent meals are better tolerated than larger meals
- Remaining upright for 2-3 hours (the time it takes for food to move through the stomach) after eating is recommended. Lying down after eating can allow stomach contents to flow back into the esophagus.
- Try eating more slowly and chewing food thoroughly. This can help improve digestion and move food more quickly through the stomach.

**If any of these suggestions are harmful to other aspects of your health, then do not engage in them*

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- Stress can be a contributor to reflux. Practicing stress management techniques, and eating meals in a relaxed environment can help
- Wear clothing that fits loosely around the stomach area. Tight fitting clothing can constrict the area and increase reflux
- Avoid exercising immediately after eating
- If you experience reflux symptoms at night, try elevating the head of the bed 6-8 inches
- Tobacco can be a trigger for reflux, so quitting smoking is recommended

Remember

We are imperfect beings and each day is new and different. Some days it may be easier to follow the suggestions than others.

Be gentle with yourself.

Goal

Self compassion and kindness towards your body

Every body is different

There are a spectrum of symptoms and reactions

If any food or movement recommendations do not feel right for your body, trust that! It may be helpful to talk more about this with your dietitian.



TOTAL HEALTH

Health is complex and is influenced by many factors.
Not all factors are within your control.
It is important to consider all of these factors, not just food and movement choices, when exploring ways to improve your health.



Psst..

It is not your fault for having this health condition!
Discuss causes and risk factors with your doctor or registered dietitian if you are interested.

References

Mahan KL, Raymond JL. *Krause's Food and The Nutrition Care Process, 14th Ed.* St Louis, MO: Elsevier; 2017.
Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD). Mayo Clinic Website. 2018. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/gerd/symptoms-causes/syc-20361940>, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/gerd/diagnosis-treatment/drc-20361959>. Accessed February 2019.

Handout created by Emily Izer, Bastyr University Dietetic Intern and reviewed by Meghan Cichy, Registered Dietitian. Template design by Elisabeth Kelsey, Dietetic Intern. www.CreatingPeaceWithFood.com Copyright©2019 by Creating Peace with Food, LLC
This handout may be used for client education. No changes may be made without written permission. May not be sold.