

Gastroesophageal Reflux

Common Symptoms

Sore throat, hoarseness, throat irritation, chronic cough, sensation of a "lump" in the throat, bitter/burning taste in throat and/or dry mouth

Treatment

Conservative treatment is outlined below.

Medications may be necessary if conservative treatment does not work.

- Antacids : use 30 minutes before meals and bedtime
- Prescription medications to reduce acid (Losec, Zantac, etc.)

Tips on how to minimize symptoms.

- ▶ Eat smaller, low-fat meals at regular intervals
- ▶ Don't gulp food, chew well
- ▶ Avoid excessive amounts of:
 - Alcoholic beverages
 - Caffeine (e.g. coffee, colas, tea)
 - Citrus or tomato juice
 - Acidic fruits & vegetables
 - Vinegar
 - Fatty/fried foods (e.g. hamburgers, bacon, hot dogs)
 - Chocolate
 - Peppermint/spearmint (gum, candy, herb)
 - Carbonated beverages
 - Gas-producing foods (e.g. beans, etc.)
 - Any food that seems to cause discomfort for you (e.g. spicy foods)
- ▶ Stop smoking
- ▶ Lose weight if necessary and avoid tight-fitting clothes
- ▶ Whenever possible avoid:
 - Anticholinergics (e.g. sedating antihistamines)
 - Potassium supplements
 - NSAIDS (drugs for pain or swelling)
 - ASA
 - Vitamin C
- ▶ If heartburn or regurgitation are predominant symptoms:
 - Move around or go for a walk after eating (but avoid strenuous exercise)
 - Wait 2 hours after meals before lying down
 - Avoid bedtime snacks
 - Elevate the head of the bed - 15 cm/6 inches (place foam wedge under mattress head or wood blocks under bed legs)