Gastro Oesophageal Reflux Disease

"Learn the truth about acid reflux and the natural methods you can use to treat it."

Acid reflux is an extremely common health problem. So common in fact, it affects one out of two people. Other terms used for this condition are gastro oesophageal reflux disease (GORD), or peptic ulcer disease. Typically, acid reflux is thought to be caused by having too much acid in your stomach. This is a serious medical mistake that affects hundreds of millions of people who are given the wrong advice and the wrong treatment.

What’s the REAL Cause of Acid Reflux?

It’s important to understand that acid reflux is NOT a disease of too much acid being produced, but rather it’s a condition related more commonly to hiatus hernia – a condition in which the acid is coming out of your stomach, where it’s supposed to remain.

After food passes through your oesophagus into your stomach, a muscular valve called the lower oesophageal sphincter (LES) closes & prevents food or acid from moving back up. Gastro oesophageal reflux occurs when the LES relaxes inappropriately, allowing acid from your stomach to flow (reflux) backward into your oesophagus.

It’s typically most bothersome at night, and tends to occur in connection with certain activities, such as:
- After eating a heavy meal
- Bending over
- Lifting
- Lying down, especially on your back

Heartburn is the primary symptom of acid reflux; a burning sensation that radiates up from your stomach to your chest and throat.

Other symptoms include:
- Hoarseness
- A feeling that food is stuck in your throat
- Tightness in your throat
- Wheezing or Asthma (due to aspiration of the stomach contents)
- Dental problems (as the stomach acid will slowly erode your teeth)
- Bad breath

In the early 80s, an Australian physician named Dr. Barry Marshall did some pioneering work on acid reflux. He discovered that an organism called helicobacter pylori (initially called campylobacter) causes a chronic low-level inflammation of your stomach lining, and is responsible, or at least a major factor, for producing many of the symptoms of acid reflux.

There are over 16,000 articles supporting the fact that suppressing stomach acid does not treat the problem. It only treats the symptoms. And one of the explanations for this is that when you suppress the amount of acid in your stomach, you decrease your body’s ability to kill the helicobacter bacteria. So it actually makes your condition worse and perpetuates the problem.

Acid Reflux Drugs are Dangerous

If you suffer with this condition, and have seen your local GP for it, you’ve likely been put on a proton pump inhibitor like Nexium or Pariet. Please understand that these are dangerous drugs and can lead to more serious conditions such as:
- Aspirating stomach contents into the lungs can lead to pneumonia.
- Improper digestion can lead to mal absorption of minerals resulting in bone loss and fractures.
- Provide the right environment for infection with Clostridium difficile; a harmful intestinal bacteria.

Proton pump inhibitors are very popular because they work quite well. However, you’ll develop both tolerance and dependence on them; some people can’t stop taking them without suffering serious repercussions.

It is recommended to wean yourself off them gradually or you may experience a severe rebound of your symptoms, and the problem may end up being worse than before you started taking the medication.
Unfortunately the symptoms of too much or too little acid are the same. Persistent acid reflux can lead to oesophageal cancer so GPs believe that lowering stomach acid will offer protection from this outcome.

**Effective Strategies to Eliminate Acid Reflux**
Implementing a lifestyle modification program can help you eliminate this condition once and for all.

**Eliminate food triggers.** Food sensitivities can be a large part of the problem; you can identify them with Bio-Compatibility testing then eliminate them from your diet. Also reduce or eliminate other triggers like caffeine, alcohol, and white flour / white sugar products.

**Increase your body’s natural production of stomach acid.** As many as 95 percent of heartburn cases are actually caused by **too LITTLE stomach acid**, rather than too much.

![pH scale]

Optimal stomach acid is about 1.5 to 3.5; a lower stomach acid will slow down and inhibit digestion. Stomach acid does not just help with the chemical breakdown of food, it activates pepsin the main digestive enzyme in the stomach and triggers the movement of the stomach to churn and move food into the small intestine. The longer food stays in the stomach the higher the risk of reflux. Therefore it makes more sense to optimize your acid levels leading to improved digestion and faster stomach emptying.

**Take a hydrochloric acid supplement.** Another option is to take a betaine hydrochloride supplement; this will help your body to better digest your food, and will also help kill the helicobacter and normalize your symptoms.

**Eat smaller portions.** Overeating will stretch the stomach beyond capacity putting more pressure on the LES. Avoid drinking for ½ hour before and after meals as too much liquid dilutes stomach acid. Eating the protein part of the meal first ensures the best concentration of acid and enzymes are available. Acid concentrations fall as more food enters the stomach.

**Modify your diet.** Eating large amounts of processed foods and sugars will exacerbate acid reflux by upsetting the bacterial balance in your stomach and intestine. Eat a lot of vegetables, and supplement with a high quality probiotic or make sure you include **fermented foods** in your diet. This will help balance your bowel flora, which can help eliminate helicobacter naturally.

**Optimizing your vitamin D levels.** Vitamin D may be essential for this condition if there is an infectious component causing the problem. You can increase your vitamin D levels through **appropriate amounts of sun exposure** or take an oral vitamin D3 supplement.

**Lose those extra kilos.** Carrying extra weight around the abdomen can inhibit stomach motility and emptying and put additional pressure on the LES. It is the fat stored around the internal organs that can push the stomach upward and contribute to the development of hiatus hernia.

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