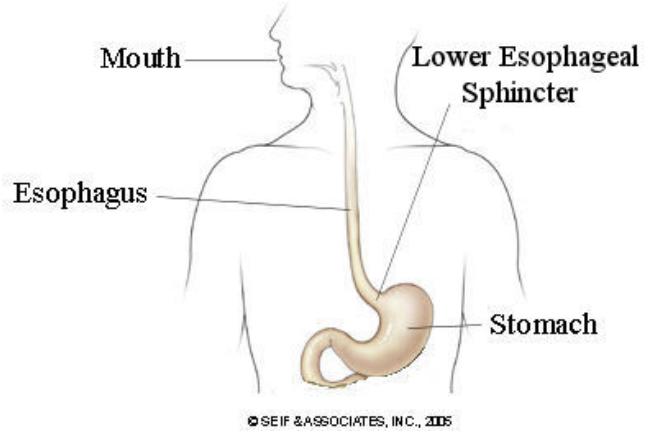
Acid Reflux (GERD)

Acid reflux is also called gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). Your stomach makes acid to help digest food. Acid reflux happens when acid from your stomach goes into the tube between your mouth and stomach (*esophagus*). Your stomach is protected from the acid, but this tube is not. When acid gets into the tube, it may cause a burning feeling in the chest (*heartburn*). Besides heartburn, other health problems can happen if the acid keeps going into the tube. Some causes of acid reflux include:

- Being overweight.
- Smoking.
- Drinking alcohol.
- Eating large meals.
- Eating meals and then going to bed right away.
- Eating certain foods.
- Increased stomach acid production.



HOME CARE

- Take all medicine as told by your doctor.
- You may need to:
  - Lose weight.
  - Avoid alcohol.
  - Quit smoking.
- **Do not** eat big meals. It is better to eat smaller meals throughout the day.
- **Do not** eat a meal and then nap or go to bed.
- Sleep with your head higher than your stomach.
- Avoid foods that bother you.
- You may need more tests, or you may need to see a special doctor.

GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF:

- You have chest pain that is different than before.
- You have pain that goes to your arms, jaw, or between your shoulder blades.
- You throw up (*vomit*) blood, dark brown liquid, or your throw up looks like coffee grounds.
- You have trouble swallowing.
- You have trouble breathing or cannot stop coughing.
- You feel dizzy or pass out.
- Your skin is cool, wet, and pale.
- Your medicine is not helping.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

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