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CAPITAL ALLERGY & RESPIRATORY DISEASE CENTER  
A MEDICAL CORPORATION

DIETARY INSTRUCTIONS FOR CONTROL OF GASTROESOPHOGEAL REFLUX

In some people, irritating stomach acid may leak out (reflux) from the stomach into the esophagus and throat. This may cause many symptoms secondary to irritation and muscle spasm of the throat. Some of the symptoms that people have from this include; cough, burning or soreness in the throat and mouth, bad taste in the mouth, ear pain, a sensation of a lump in the throat or need to clear the throat, burning in the mid-chest or stomach, indigestion or belching.

The following instructions are designed to help relieve these symptoms by controlling the degree of acid reflux, by neutralizing the stomach acid, and reducing the production of stomach acid. If these measures do not help or your symptoms worsen, you should contact your physician. Reflux and its symptoms may be periodic and recur so keep these instructions available should your symptoms recur at a later date.

1. Take an antacid in liquid form (Gelusil, Maalox, Gaviscon, or others of your choice) 20-30 minutes after meals and at bedtime. Liquid antacids seem to be better than tablets. Many adults require 1 and 3 tablespoons.
2. If you are overweight, you should lose weight.
3. Diet restrictions help control symptoms. A bland diet and multiple feedings are recommended. You should avoid highly seasoned food that is either very hot or very cold. Care should be taken to eat slowly and chew food properly.
4. Alcohol, tobacco and caffeine are irritants to the esophagus and stomach, and should be avoided. Alcohol and coffee also stimulate stomach acid secretions.
5. Do not eat for 3 hours before retiring.
6. For nighttime relief, sleep with the head of your bed elevated since symptoms are more likely to occur if you lie flat. The best way to achieve elevation is to place cinder blocks, wood or bricks under the legs of the head of the bed. The desired elevation is from 4 to 11 inches, with 8 inches a customary range. If this is not practical, sleep on 2 or 3 pillows. Sometimes, sleeping on the right side prevents distressing attacks.
7. Clothing that fits tightly across the mid-section of the body should be avoided.
8. Attempt to avoid recurrent throat clearing. With reflux this can become habitual and is harmful to the larynx.