

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF GERD?

The most common symptom of GERD is heartburn. However, GERD can produce a wide variety of symptoms including those listed below.^{1,3}

- Dental erosion and bad breath
- Change in voice
- Cough
- Hoarseness
- Sore throat
- Asthma
- Shortness of breath
- Heartburn
- Dysphagia (difficulty swallowing)
- Chest pain
- Regurgitation



GERD AFFECTS PEOPLE IN DIFFERENT WAYS. IT IS IMPORTANT TO SPEAK WITH YOUR PHYSICIAN ABOUT YOUR SYMPTOMS TO DETERMINE IF THEY MAY BE CAUSED BY GERD.

WHAT IS GERD?

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), also referred to as reflux, is a chronic digestive disease in which acid and bile flow back from the stomach into the esophagus, creating pain and often causing damage to the lining of the esophagus. GERD usually has a life-long negative impact on an individual’s quality of life.

WHAT CAUSES GERD?

GERD is caused by a weak lower esophageal sphincter (LES). Normally the LES acts like a one-way valve, allowing food and liquid to pass through to the stomach, but preventing stomach contents from flowing back into the esophagus.¹ (See Figure 1.)

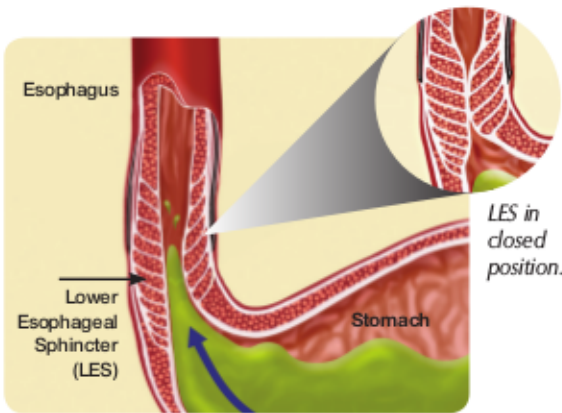


Figure 1: In people with GERD, the lower esophageal sphincter is weak, allowing acid and bile to flow back from the stomach into the esophagus.

AN ESTIMATED **15%** OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE CHRONIC REFLUX ALSO HAVE **BARRETT’S ESOPHAGUS**²



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Important Reminder: This information is intended only to provide general information and not as a definitive basis for diagnosis or treatment in any particular case. It is very important that you consult a doctor about your specific condition, contraindications, and possible complications.

1. National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse (NDDIC). <http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/gerd/#symptoms>.
2. www.ASGE.org
3. Mayo Clinic GERD . <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/gerd/basics/symptoms/con-20025201>.
4. GERD Patient Study: Patients and Their Medications (AGA Institute)

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RISKS OF GERD

In addition to producing a wide range of symptoms, GERD can lead to potentially serious complications including:

- Esophagitis (*Inflammation that can damage the tissue of the esophagus*)
- Stricture (*Narrowing of the esophagus*)
- Barrett’s esophagus (*Pre-cancerous changes to the tissue lining the esophagus*)
- Esophageal cancer

SYMPTOM MANAGEMENT

Lifestyle Changes – In some cases changing diet, losing weight, limiting smoking and alcohol consumption, altering eating and sleeping patterns may help address symptoms of GERD.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Drug Therapy – GERD medications are designed to reduce acid production in the stomach. While these medications may reduce acid and help heal irritation to the esophagus, they do not address the cause of GERD, the weak lower esophageal sphincter (LES), and do not prevent reflux.

The United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued a series of statements on possible side effects of long-term use of Proton Pump Inhibitors (PPI), a popular class of drug for treating GERD. (FDA.gov)

Surgery – There are minimally invasive surgical procedures available to treat GERD. These procedures are designed to correct the cause of GERD, the weak LES, and restore the body’s barrier to reflux.

GERD
Gastroesophageal reflux disease



ABOUT 40% OF GERD SUFFERERS CONTINUE TO HAVE SYMPTOMS WHILE TAKING MEDICATIONS FOR GERD⁴

IS IT TIME TO CHANGE MY GERD TREATMENT?

If you are currently treating your GERD with medication and answer “yes” to any of the following questions, talk with your physician about alternative treatment options.

- ☐ Are you dependent on medication to manage your GERD symptoms?
- ☐ Do you continue to suffer GERD symptoms while on medication?
- ☐ Is your GERD affecting your quality of life? (*Examples: Poor sleep, inability to tolerate certain foods, inability to participate in daily activities*)
- ☐ Are you concerned about the long term use of drugs to treat your GERD?
- ☐ Are you concerned about the long-term risks of serious complications from your GERD?

CONTACT YOUR PHYSICIAN IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR GERD OR THINK IT IS GETTING WORSE.