

Lifestyle Changes for Controlling GERD

When you have GERD, stomach acid feels as if it's backing up toward your mouth. Whether or not you take medication to control your GERD, your symptoms can often be improved with lifestyle changes. Talk to your doctor about the following suggestions, which may help you get relief from your symptoms.

Raise Your Head

Reflux is more likely to strike when you're lying down flat, because stomach fluid can flow backward more easily. Raising the head of your bed 4-6 inches can help. To do this:

Slide blocks or books under the legs at the head of your bed. Or, place a wedge under the mattress. Many foam stores can make a suitable wedge for you. The wedge should run from your waist to the top of your head.

Don't just prop your head on several pillows. This increases pressure on your stomach. It can make GERD worse.

Watch Your Eating Habits

Certain foods may increase the acid in your stomach or relax the lower esophageal sphincter, making GERD more likely. It's best to avoid the following:

Coffee, tea, and carbonated drinks (with and without caffeine)

Fatty, fried, or spicy food

Mint, chocolate, onions, and tomatoes

Any other foods that seem to irritate your stomach or cause you pain

Relieve the Pressure

Eat smaller meals, even if you have to eat more often.

Don't lie down right after you eat. Wait a few hours for your stomach to empty.

Avoid tight belts and tight-fitting clothes.

Lose excess weight.

Tobacco and Alcohol

Avoid smoking tobacco and drinking alcohol. They can make GERD symptoms worse.