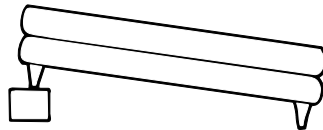


## Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD)

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is a condition wherein stomach acid “refluxes” upward into the esophagus. The burning sensation that is commonly experienced with GERD is due to the irritant effect stomach acid has on the esophagus. Normally, a muscle separates the esophagus from the stomach, preventing stomach contents from getting into the esophagus. When this muscle becomes incompetent, reflux occurs. Reflux may be present even if you are not experiencing classic symptoms of reflux, known as heartburn or indigestion. Asthma and sinus disease can be worsened by acid reflux. GERD can also cause chronic sore throats or cough. Several tests are available to diagnose reflux, but the gold standard is a PH probe. This test isn’t done that frequently because it is invasive and expensive. More often than not, medications will be tried empirically if your physician suspects the presence of GERD. The following are pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic ways to treat acid reflux:

### Anti-Reflux Instructions

1. Dietary measures to treat reflux included:
  - a. Eat small, frequent meals as opposed to large meals.
  - b. Eat your evening meal early; do not eat within 3 hours of going to bed.
  - c. Have your larger meal at lunch if possible and a smaller meal at dinner.
  - d. Avoid alcohol, mints, caffeine, chocolate, tomato products (small amounts i.e. pizza sauce is ok), spicy foods, and fatty foods as these may precipitate reflux.
2. Sleep on a bed that has its head raised 6 inches. Pillows are not effective to achieve this. Instead, use wooden blocks or bricks underneath the head of the bed, i.e. head up but flat.



3. Take over-the-counter medications such as Axid, Pepcid, Tagamet, Zantac, Prilosec, and /or antacids such as Tums, Maalox, Mylanta, Rolaids, etc.
4. Prescription medications such as Aciphex, Nexium, Prevacid, Protonix, Zegerid, or Kapidex may be required if over-the-counter medications do not control symptoms.
5. If overweight, reduce weight.
6. Avoid lying down, bending over, or straining immediately after eating.
7. Quit cigarette smoking.
8. Avoid tight-fitting clothing, especially after eating.

**Note: Some cases of severe GERD can result in significant esophageal disease and must be evaluated by a GI (gastroenterologist) specialist.**