



Phone: 904-880-0911 Fax: 904-880-9388

Reflux

These are some general recommendations to help you manage reflux.

The goal of these Lifestyle changes are to allow you to avoid long term medication if possible, however sometimes some level of medication is still required.

Try to move heavier meals earlier in the day and have a light dinner.

Avoid spicy, fatty, and heavy meals late in the day, especially at dinner.

Avoid caffeine, alcohol, carbonated beverages, chocolate.

Yes, we have to enjoy life but moderation is key. Just keep in mind that the things listed above can make reflux worse.

Ideally there should be a 3-hour window between your last meal of the day and when you lay down to sleep at night. If you take naps during the day, you should also try to have a 3 hours window between a large meal and the nap.

It can help to elevate the head of your bed 15-30 degrees (or 6-8 inches if using bricks/cinderblocks/stands). Much less than this and it is not effective, much more than this and it is often uncomfortable. Pillows are far less effective than physically elevating the head of the bed.

Quit tobacco: Nicotine in any form (smoking, chewing tobacco) relaxes smooth muscle which includes the lower esophageal sphincter muscle which prevents stomach contents from coming back up into the esophagus (reflux).

Weight loss and exercise. I can personally vouch for this one. I notice that when my physical activity levels are lower or if I gain even just a couple of extra pounds my acid reflux is much worse! Even if you are "skinny" just a few pounds of intra-abdominal fat can increase the pressure on your stomach and make reflux worse. The best part is that weight loss and exercise help to improve MANY other common problems as well. Starting is the hardest part. Take small steps to do something active every day.

****Acid Medication**

If you are taking a medication ending in -zole (pantoprazole, omeprazole, lansoprazole, etc), you need to take this 30 min-1 hour before eating or drinking anything (other than water) in the morning (EVEN COFFEE!) otherwise this medication will not be effective. Prilosec (omeprazole) is available over the counter without prescription.

Medications ending in -dine (famotidine) do not carry a similar restriction, but also tend to work better if taken before eating. Pepcid (famotidine) is available over the counter without prescription.

If you are stopping your acid medication, be aware that you can have a temporary “rebound” increase in acid production and reflux symptoms. This can last for up to 2 weeks. You should be extra cautious with lifestyle modifications during this time.