

Management of Heartburn & Reflux

Follow your doctor's advice and individualized treatment program.

Depending on what triggers your symptom(s), changes in your diet or lifestyle may be recommended to help alleviate your symptom(s).

Changes in Diet

- Reduce the meal size, if you have symptoms after eating.
- Avoid fatty foods, if they provoke symptoms.
- Avoid caffeine-containing beverages (coffee, tea, and colas), if they provoke symptoms.
- Avoid alcohol, spicy foods and chocolate, if they provoke symptoms.

Changes in Lifestyle

- Smoking may worsen your symptoms. Try to stop smoking or cut down on the number of cigarettes you smoke.
- Extra pounds may add to the problem. Try to keep your weight down.
- If you have symptoms when you lie down, raise the head of your bed with 6-inch blocks.
- Avoid wearing tight belts or tight-fitting clothing.
- Avoid eating for two to three hours before going to sleep.



A Look at Acid Reflux

The Problem

The medical term for the condition you have been experiencing is gastroesophageal reflux. Put simply, it means that acid produced by your stomach to help digest the food you eat is flowing backward, or refluxing, into your esophagus. Your esophagus is a tube about ten inches long and one inch wide that leads from the back of your throat to your stomach. Acid washing back into your esophagus may cause irritation and heartburn.

Your doctor has recommended measures that may help relieve symptoms. You may find, however, additional therapy may be required.

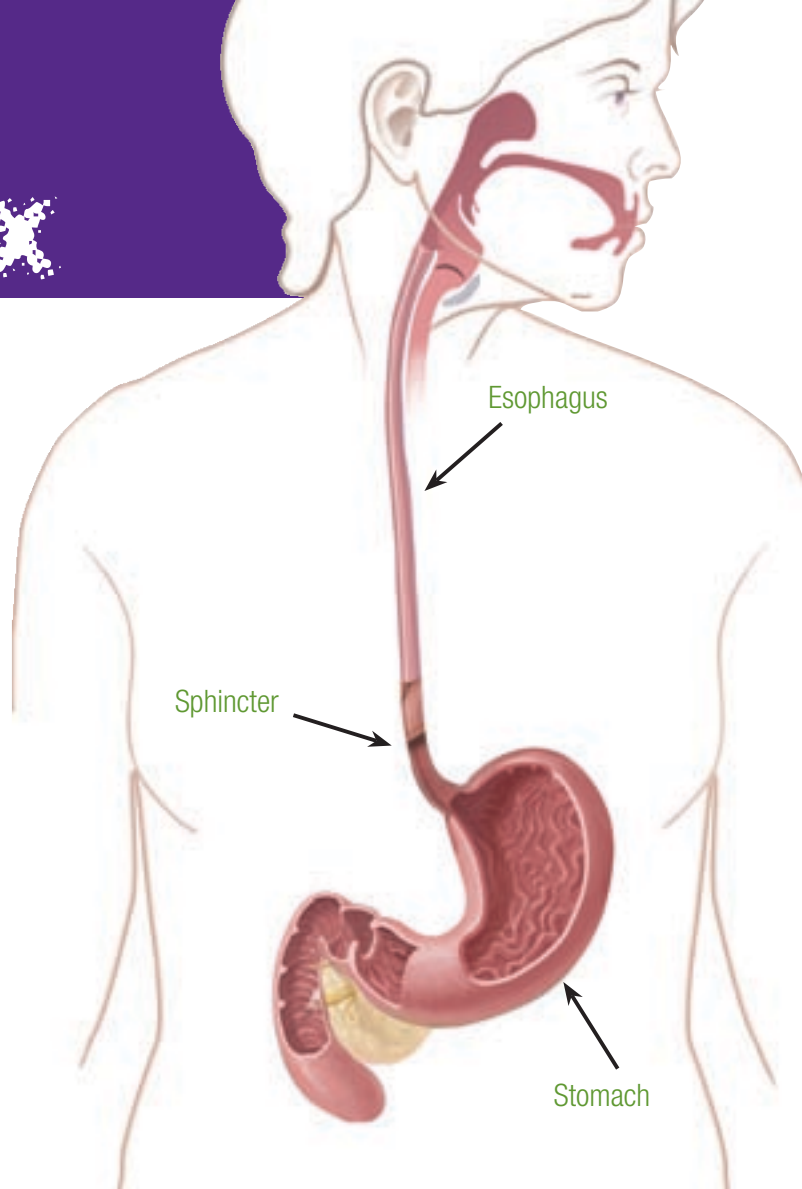
The Cause

At the base of your esophagus, between it and your stomach, is a muscular valve, or sphincter. This sphincter (Lower Esophageal Sphincter or LES) opens to let food into your stomach. Normally, it will not allow the contents of the stomach to back up into the esophagus. Sometimes, however, it doesn't work properly or is overwhelmed for any of a number of reasons, such as:

- Transient LES relaxations
- Loss of LES resting tone
- Straining, causing increased intra-abdominal pressure
- Pregnancy
- Other medical conditions

Common Symptoms

- Frequent heartburn
- Regurgitation (sour or bitter taste in the mouth)
- Difficulty in swallowing



Notes:
