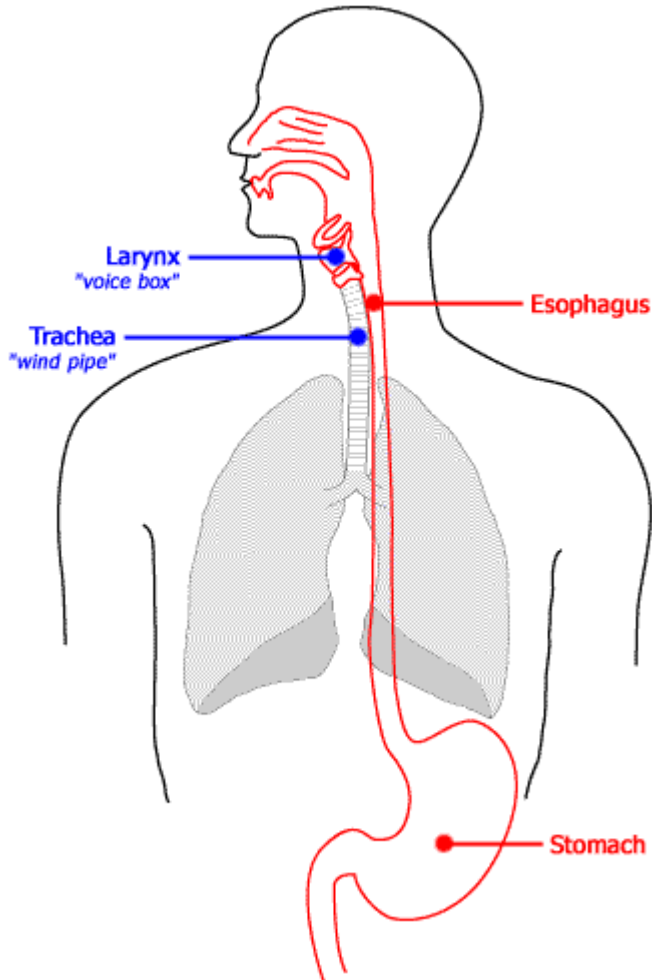


GERD (GastroEsophageal Reflux Disease) & Reflux Laryngitis

What is GERD?

Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) is inflammation of the esophagus (swallowing tube) and often the larynx (voice box) caused by acid *refluxing* or backing up from the stomach into the esophagus. In many people this refluxing acid reaches all the way up to the voice box and higher-- sometimes even into the back of the mouth and nose.



This acid causes irritation of the delicate tissues that cover the inside of the esophagus, larynx, and back of the throat. This results in various symptoms including

- a painful or burning sensation in the chest ("heartburn")
- difficult or painful swallowing
- hoarseness
- increased mucus in the throat (phlegm)
- a feeling that something is stuck in the throat (foreign body sensation or *globus*).

What is the treatment?

The goal of treatment is to keep stomach acid and other irritating substances out of the esophagus and throat. Treatment allows healing of the damaged esophagus and voice box as well as prevents further damage.

Treatments include [lifestyle changes](#) and often medications that help decrease the production of stomach acid.

It is important to remember that it may take some time after beginning treatment for many of these symptoms to improve and eventually go away.

Lifestyle changes to decrease GERD

Bed blocks



Elevate the head of your bed 2-6 inches with wood blocks or bricks. Using extra pillows is NOT a good substitute. Use of a foam wedge beneath the upper half of the body is an alternative.

Limit coffee



Limit coffee to 2-3 cups per day. Limiting consumption of other caffeine containing beverages (tea, soft drinks) may also be helpful.



Avoid foods that cause your symptoms

Foods to avoid



Avoid tight clothing

Tight belts, tight pants, or girdles can

are: spicy and fatty foods, tomato and citrus juices (such as grapefruit and orange juices), chocolate, mints, coffee, tea, colas, and alcoholic beverages.

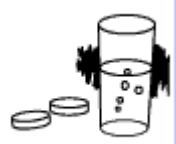
increase the pressure on the abdomen and stomach.

Do not lie down for 2 hours after eating



Allow gravity to work. Also, avoid bending over at the waist to pick up things. Bend at the knees instead.

Antacids



Antacids can be taken at bedtime and 30-60 minutes after each meal or as directed by your physician.

Stop smoking



If you cannot stop, decreasing the number of cigarettes you smoke may help.

Eat smaller meals



Don't overfill your stomach.

Maintain your ideal weight



Excess weight increases the amount of

pressure
constantly
placed on your
stomach. Even
small amounts
of weight loss
may help.