

(Wellness Tips Ezine) Solutions for heart burn, acid reflux and GERD



Solutions for Heart Burn, Acid Reflux and GERD

Acid reflux is a fairly common condition that has serious consequences for the body, and can often be addressed without antacids.

Most of us have probably encountered heart burn at one time or another, and many suffer from heart burn or acid reflux on a daily basis. The problem is caused by hydrochloric acid in the stomach splashing up into the esophagus (food pipe) causing a burning sensation in the chest. If this acid gets into the food pipe often, it can inflame and damage it. The usual medical treatment is antacids, which neutralize the acid, or protein pump inhibitors which block the body's ability to produce acid in the first place.

But here's the thing. Our body manufactures hydrochloric acid for a reason. We need it to help us break down and digest proteins, to stimulate the pancreas and liver to dump their digestive juices into the tract for the digestion of carbohydrates and fats, and also to kill off dangerous microbes that make their way inside of us along with the food we eat. So by reducing HCL we are destroying one of our very important immune defenses, thereby increasing our chances of food poisoning. And we are severely impacting our ability to gain the nutrition from our food. Since food provides the building-blocks for our cells, acid reflux can be considered a sign of malnourishment.

Acid reflux can be viewed like a warning light on your car. What would you think of your car mechanic if you brought your car in and he removed the warning light-bulb as a strategy to resolving your car problem? That is exactly what taking antacids or PPIs does - it deals with the symptom but does not address the underlying issue.

Ironically, more frequently than not, those that suffer from acid reflux actually have too little acid rather than too much. Commonly another symptom is an inability to digest meat - it sits in the stomach for hours because there is not enough acid there to break it down. The little acid these people have is floating on top of the other gastric juices, and then splashes up when the valve from the esophagus (food pipe) opens. So taking PPIs which decreases acid production further is actually making the underlying problem worse.

The problem can also be mechanical. The stomach is located on the left side just under the ribs and is snugged up against the diaphragm, which separates the chest cavity from the abdominal cavity. There is a hole in the diaphragm which allows the esophagus (food pipe) through to the stomach, and there should be a few centimetres of esophagus below the diaphragm before it enters the stomach.

The diaphragm moves a long way when we breathe, and if the esophagus is pulled up too high, the valve that prevents the stomach acid from backing into the esophagus may be kinked open due to diaphragm movement, and acid can more easily escape up. If there is a huge amount of upward pressure, the stomach can also be pushed up through the hole in the diaphragm, creating a hiatal hernia.

Other common symptoms related to low stomach acid include belching, gas, flatulence, indigestion, constipation or diarrhea, undigested particles in stool, iron deficiency, fatigue, cracked, weak fingernails, dry skin, food allergies, acne, and/or chronic candida.

Here are some solutions to heart burn, acid reflux or GERD:

- Find a visceral massage therapist who can nudge your stomach a bit lower allowing for proper closure of the valve, and preventing a hiatal hernia.
- Drink at least half your bodyweight in pounds, in ounces of water each day. A [recent study](#) shows that water works better and faster than antacids to clear up heart burn. And it provides the raw material from which to make your own HCL.
- Drink your water at room temperature rather than ice cold, as ice cold water suppresses HCL production.
- Eat a quarter to half a cup of fermented foods that have not been pasteurized after they were fermented, such as cold sauerkraut or kimchi with each meal, in order to increase the good bacteria in the gut. Or speed up the process by taking a [good quality probiotic](#).
- Chew your food thoroughly until liquid before swallowing to help digestion.
- Decrease or eliminate sugar intake, which suppresses HCL production.
- Eat lots of bitter greens, cooked - dandelion is especially effective at increasing HCL production.
- Do not lie down after a meal - stay upright so gravity can aid in keeping the acid down.
- Avoid raw vegetables until digestion is improved but do eat them cooked or

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termented.

- Avoid triggers like caffeine, alcohol, hot and black peppers.
- May be helpful to take a multivitamin if you've been suffering from acid reflux for a while, as you will probably be mineral and vitamin deficient. Vitamin B12 can't be digested at all without adequate HCL, for example.
- To support your digestion until you are making enough of your own HCL, take [betaine HCL supplements](#) immediately after each meal. To figure out the right dosage for you, take the tablets / capsules one at a time with a meal until you get a slight burning sensation. Your dosage is one less pill than that with each meal. When you are at the right dosage, your stomach should feel like you just had a warm cup of tea.
- [Digestive enzymes](#) may also assist initially until the body is producing them properly on its own again.
- If you are overweight, decrease sugar and flour products as well as all processed food in order to lose weight. The extra abdominal weight particularly when lying down, pushes the stomach up, potentially worsening the mechanics.
- Turning the lights out by 10:30pm increases [melatonin](#) secretion, which has been shown to reduce acid reflux.

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