

Reflux Esophagitis

What is it? Reflux esophagitis happens when the stomach acid flows back into the tube that connects the mouth to the stomach. This tube is called the esophagus. Acid irritates the esophagus and may cause you to have heartburn. Heartburn may get better with treatment, but it may return.

Causes: Heartburn is caused by stomach acid backing up in the esophagus. This happens because the muscle at the top of the stomach has gotten weak. Heartburn has nothing to do with the heart. You may have heartburn if you weigh too much, are pregnant, smoke, or drink too much alcohol. Eating too much may cause heartburn. Some medicines or coughing too hard may also cause heartburn.

Signs and Symptoms: You may feel burning in your chest, usually at night. Heartburn is most common when you are lying down. Other signs may be burping. You may have a sour or acid taste in your mouth. Or you may have a sore throat. The stomach acid may bother your esophagus or cause other problems, such as ulcers. Sometimes reflux can cause asthma.

Care: You may need medicine for your heartburn. It may help to raise the head of your bed 6 to 8 inches on blocks. Check with your caregiver before taking any medicine if you are pregnant.

Do's and Don'ts: Do eat small meals slowly. Do **not** bend over or lie down after eating. Lose weight if you are overweight. You should drink more fluids, such as water or juices. But you should **not** drink alcohol or drinks that have caffeine (coffee, tea, cocoa, cola drinks). Do **not** wear tight clothes around your chest or stomach.