

Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD) Diet

GERD is a chronic digestive disease that occurs when stomach acid flows back (refluxes) into your food pipe (esophagus) through the lower esophageal sphincter (LES). The LES is a muscle located at the bottom of the esophagus that opens to let food in and closes to keep food in the stomach. When this muscle relaxes too often or for too long, acid refluxes back into the esophagus, causing GERD symptoms. Certain foods should be avoided because they can cause the LES to stay open longer than normal or that increase acid production in the stomach.

Suggestions for decreasing gastric distress (due to increased acid secretions):

- Eat smaller, more frequent meals so less of the acidic stomach contents flow back into the esophagus.
- Eat low fat meals. High fat meals stay in the stomach longer.
- Avoid over eating or continuous snacking
- Avoid highly seasoned foods
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine
- Eat slowly and chew your food well
- Avoid tobacco
- Avoid excessive amounts of liquids with a meal
- Eat in a relaxed environment. Avoid stress during and immediately following meals
- When you use dairy products, use with meals

In addition, the following may be helpful:

- Avoid lying down, bending over, or straining immediately after a meal. Stay upright for 2 hours after a meal, especially with an acute episode.
- Avoid eating within 2 to 3 hours of going to bed.
- Avoid tight fitting clothing around the abdomen, especially after a meal.
- Lose weight if overweight. Excess pounds put pressure on your abdomen, pushing up your stomach and causing acid to back up into your esophagus.
- Keep a journal, recording when symptoms occur and the food you were eating.
- Chewing sugarless gum after meals may reduce reflux some what because of the saliva production.
- Elevate the head of your bed six to nine inches so your head is raised up. Try propping up the front legs of the bed or place a foam wedge under the top portion of the mattress. Stacking pillows is not effective.

Food Group	Recommended	Not Recommended
Beverages	Caffeine free herbal teas (Except peppermint and spearmint)	Coffee and decaf coffee Caffeine beverages Tomato and citrus juice Soft drinks Energy drinks Liquor Non herbal tea
Meats/ meat substitutes	Lean meats and fish prepared without added fat Eggs Dried beans and peas	Fried meats Bacon Sausage Pepperoni Salami Hot dogs Nuts/ nut butters
Fruits/ vegetables	Non citrus fruits as tolerated All other vegetables as tolerated (Choose a variety)	Tomato products (spaghetti sauce, chili, salsa, pizza) Citrus- orange, lemon, grapefruit, pineapple Creamy- style vegetables Fried vegetables
Spices/ miscellaneous	All others as tolerated	Peppermint and spearmint Pepper Creamy salad dressings Cream sauces Gravies
Breads/ starches	Any prepared without added fat Choose whole grains for at least half of your servings for the day.	Pastries Croissants Spaghetti with marinara sauce
Desserts/ sweets	Low fat puddings Gelatin	Chocolate High-fat cookies, brownies
Milk/ dairy	Skim milk, 1% milk Low fat and nonfat yogurt and cheese Soy Milk	Whole milk Chocolate milk Ice cream

All information is for educational purposes only.
If you have any questions, please contact your primary care provider or registered dietitian.