GERD is a condition in which food from the stomach leaks back into the esophagus, the tube that connects your mouth to your stomach.

**What is GERD?**

**What are the symptoms of GERD?**

- Feeling that food is stuck behind the breastbone
- Heartburn
- Nausea after eating
- Bringing food back up (regurgitation)
- Cough
- Difficulty swallowing
- Hoarseness or change in voice
- Sore throat

**What causes GERD?**

After we eat, food is carried into the stomach from the mouth through the esophagus. At the lower end of the esophagus, where it joins the stomach, there is a ring of muscle fibers called the lower esophageal sphincter, or LES. In GERD, the LES doesn’t close properly causing food to leak back into the esophagus.
How is GERD diagnosed?

• Your doctor will perform a physical exam and ask about your medical history.
• In some cases, an endoscopy will be performed to confirm the diagnosis.

How is GERD controlled?

• Medications that reduce acid production in the stomach.
• Medications that strengthen the lower esophageal sphincter.
• If you feel like your daily medicine isn’t working to control your GERD symptoms, contact your doctor.

Lifestyle modifications

• If you are a smoker, talk to us about helping you quit.
• Don’t drink alcohol.
• Lose weight if overweight or obese.
• Avoid foods that cause heartburn, such as fried or fatty foods, chocolate, garlic, tomato, caffeine, etc.
• Eat smaller meals at a time.
• Avoid tight fitting clothes that put pressure on your waist or stomach.

• Wait for at least 2-3 hours after a meal before lying down.
• To prevent nighttime heartburn, elevate the head of the bed by 6-9 inches. Extra pillows that raise the head may not help. You can use a wedge support to raise the top half of your body.

This information is intended for general reference only and is not a substitute for professional medical advice.