

## What are the symptoms?

- Burning in stomach or chest
- Acidic taste in mouth or throat
- Nausea
- Bloating/Belching
- Cough
- Trouble swallowing
- Lump in the throat sensation
- Increased saliva
- Hoarseness

## What is GERD?

- Gastroesophageal reflux, also called "acid reflux," occurs when the stomach contents back up into the esophagus and/or mouth.
- Occasional reflux is normal and can happen in healthy infants, children, and adults, most often after eating a meal.
- Most episodes are brief and do not cause bothersome symptoms or complications.
- In contrast, people with gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) experience bothersome symptoms or damage to the esophagus because of acid reflux.

## How do I feel better?

- There is no specific diet that will prevent all symptoms of GERD. Avoid foods and medications that aggravate your symptoms. Excessive chocolate, spicy, citrus, peppermint, and fatty foods may cause bothersome acid reflux in some people.
- Eat small meals at regular intervals; lose weight (if you are overweight).
- Decrease or stop smoking.
- Decrease or avoid caffeine; avoid alcohol.
- Avoid wearing clothing that is tight around the waist.
- Avoid lying down immediately after eating/drinking.
- Avoid eating or drinking within 2-3 hours before going to sleep.
- Decrease stress.
- If you have heartburn at night, elevate the head of your bed about 4-8 inches.
- Try using medications that may be recommended by your provider, such as antacids (Tums®, Mylanta®), histamine and/or acid blockers (Pepcid®, Zantac®), or proton pump inhibitors (Prilosec®, Nexium®, Prevacid®).

## Seek medical treatment if:

- Abdominal pain not relieved by an antacid or other prescribed medication
- Stool that is black (like tar), or bloody
- Recurrent vomiting, or blood in your vomit
- Difficulty swallowing
- GERD symptoms persist for more than three months
- Unexplained weight loss