

Being Gerd Free “Naturally”

Gerd (Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease) is an ugly sounding word which has become the popular standard for describing acid reflux disease. A simple definition for Gerd would be the reflux or splashing up of digestive fluids from the stomach into the esophagus.

The term Gerd has only been used for about twenty years. The symptoms are heartburn, chest pain, regurgitation of gastric juices and difficulty swallowing. Other problems can be a lack of sleep, nausea, labored breathing and abdominal pain.

Gerd can become a very serious life threatening matter. When left unchecked this condition can develop into Barrett’s Esophagus, which is a precursor to esophageal cancer.

The human body was designed to keep gastric acid in the stomach where it belongs. Its function is to sterilize and digest what we eat and drink. Stomach acid is mainly composed of hydrochloric acid which is a very powerful corrosive agent.

The lower esophageal sphincter (LES) is a muscular valve at the bottom of the esophagus which allows ingested material to move down into the stomach. It is designed to close and keep this material from coming back up. Most people who experience Gerd do so because the LES becomes relaxed and malfunctions, allowing acid to reflux. Where the stomach has an acid proof lining the esophagus does not and is easily damaged by stomach acid.

Why the world is being plagued by this phenomenon is quite a mystery, but it is estimated that over 300 million people worldwide suffer from the symptoms of this disorder. The medical community relies mainly on pharmaceutical drugs to treat these symptoms. Unfortunately, most doctors have no knowledge of nutrition or alternative natural therapy. In most cases, their job is to treat the symptoms of acid reflux, not to cure the disease.

Common sense would dictate that Gerd has everything to do with what we eat and drink. It is, however, more complicated than that. It has a lot to do with how we eat and drink, as well. Most of us know that there are certain foods that we find difficult, as individuals, to digest. Everyone is different. We can all react differently to the same food or beverage. Some people cannot easily digest tomato sauce while

others have no problem with it. Avoiding so called "trigger" foods is an important first step in overcoming Gerd.

Eating on the run usually means eating unhealthy food too quickly. Not chewing properly is a major contributor to acid indigestion. We live in a culture where most people eat lunch in a rushed environment at the office or in a fast food facility. Most of these meals are loaded with hard to digest fats and sugars and have very little food value. Carbonated beverages relax the LES causing heartburn, as well. Eating fruits like bananas and apples would be a far more healthy choice.

Drinking alcohol and smoking may also relax the LES and even chocolate makes it lazy. One should limit daily alcohol consumption to one or two glasses of red wine. Besides the evident danger of smoking tobacco, it also causes the body to be acidic in nature. An acidic body is not a good place for proper digestion. Coffee stimulates the hypersecretion of gastric acids. Having a cup of Kukicha Twig Tea, which is very alkaline, would be a better option.

Even a modest amount of stress can contribute to indigestion. Eating should be conducted in a quiet, restful and peaceful place. Eating a meal in front the TV can exacerbate poor digestion. It's hard to feel relaxed while watching the evening news - imagine what it does to your stomach. Another form of stress is physical stress. Being over weight and wearing tight clothing can put pressure on the abdominal area forcing the contents of the stomach upward.

Many pharmaceutical drugs have an acidic affect on the body and therefore contribute to digestive ailments. I have found that for almost any pharmaceutical drug there is a natural treatment that can be used instead. Most drugs are synthesized versions of some naturally occurring substance, anyway.

Besides all the things we should avoid in order to be Gerd free, there are many natural and healthy ways to overcome acid indigestion. Eating alkaline foods, drinking enough water and even chewing gum can be beneficial. Chewing gum before and after eating produces saliva. Saliva is very alkaline and aids in digestion.

Herbs like marshmallow, slippery elm and licorice root have a positive affect in reducing acidity. They also decrease inflammation and sooth areas damaged by contact with acid. Ginger has the ability to actually absorb acid and is beneficial in aiding all types of digestive problems.

There are spices like cumin and turmeric which have the ability to fight off digestive difficulties.

The incidence of GERD is greater in people over the age of forty, but it can affect anyone, even infants. GERD affects people of every age, socioeconomic class and race. Rather than relying on dangerous and expensive drugs to curb the symptoms of this condition, we should strive to cure it naturally. By using natural remedies and a little common sense anyone can become GERD free.

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