



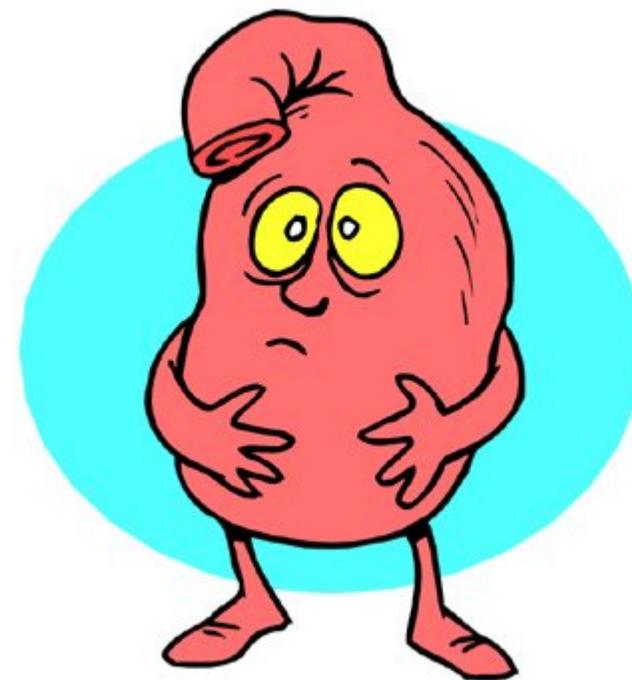
Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD)





Acid Reflux

Acid reflux is when acid from the stomach moves backwards into the esophagus.





Heartburn

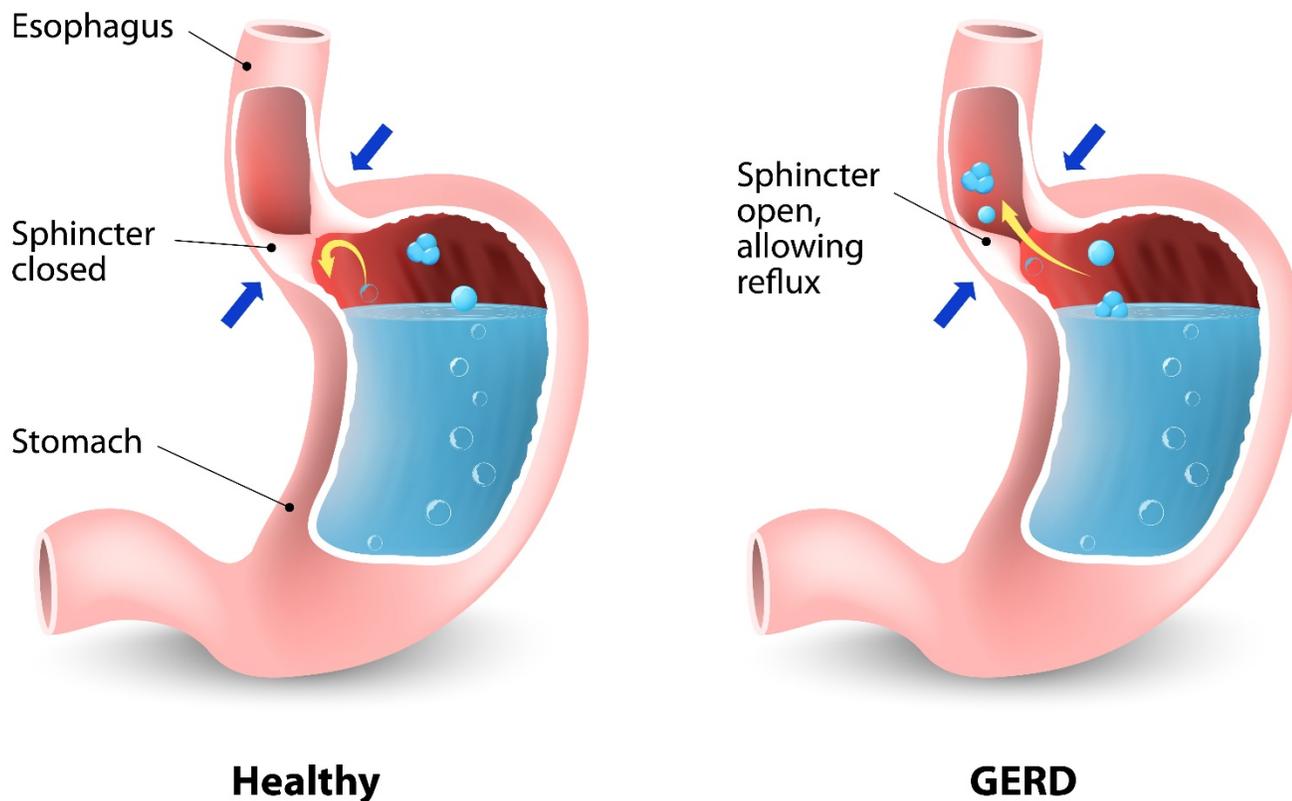
Heartburn is a symptom of acid reflux and GERD. It can be a burning feeling, pain, or tightness in the chest. Heartburn is sometimes mistaken as a heart attack because of pain or tightness in the chest.

Heartburn is very common. “it is estimated that more than 60 million Americans experience heartburn at least once a month.”¹

1. <https://www.healthline.com/health/gerd/heartburn-vs-acid-reflux#heartburn>



Gastroesophageal reflux disease



GERD is chronic acid reflux, which happens more than twice a week.

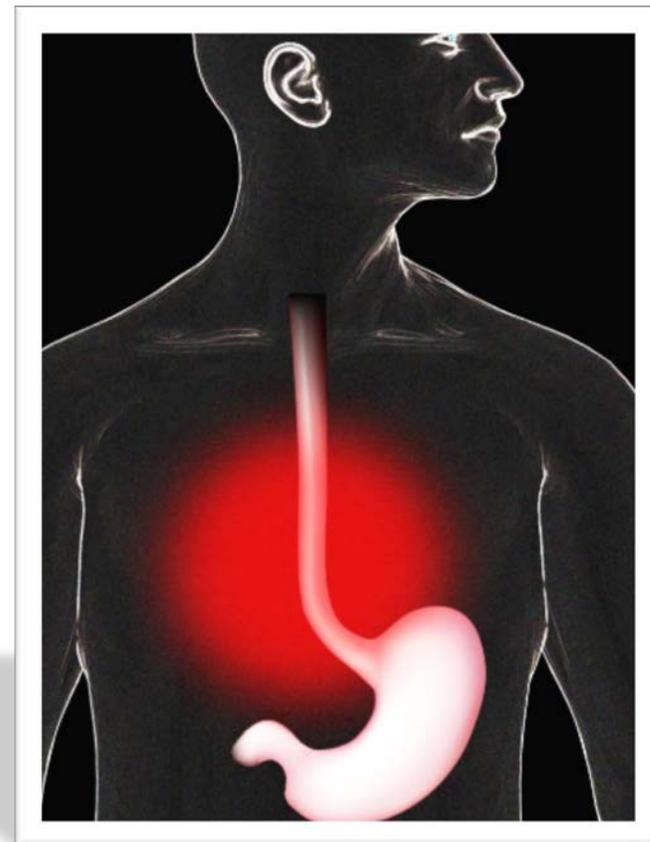
¹Vakil N, van Zanten SV, Kahrilas P, et al. The Montreal Definition and Classification of Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease: A Global Evidence-Based Consensus. *Am J Gastroenterol* 2006;101:1900–1920.



How common is GERD?

Up to 40% of the US general population report symptoms of GERD¹

- Around 10-20% of GERD patients experience symptoms daily
- Hallmark symptoms are heartburn and regurgitation



¹*Dig Dis Sci.* 2014 Oct;59(10):2488-96



What causes GERD?

One possible reason has to do with the ***muscle at the bottom of the esophagus***. Normally this muscle closes to keep food and stomach acid from coming back up the esophagus. In some people with GERD this muscle is weak or does not always work correctly.

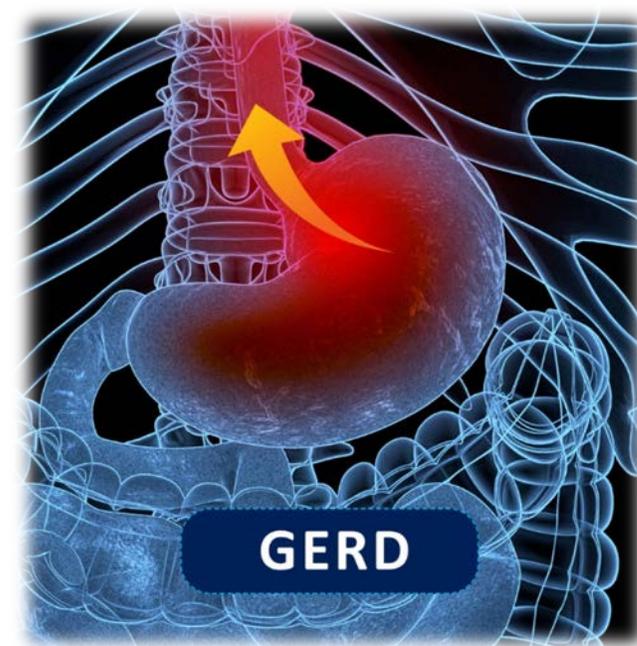
Another cause of GERD is a stomach abnormality called a ***hiatal hernia*** when the upper part of the stomach and lower esophageal sphincter move above the diaphragm.

Dietary and lifestyle choices may contribute to GERD. Certain foods and beverages can ***trigger reflux and heartburn***. Being overweight can also put pressure on the stomach.



GERD Symptoms

- Heartburn (acid indigestion)
- Painful burning sensations in the throat or chest
- Wheezing, symptoms of asthma, chronic coughing and difficulty breathing
- Trouble swallowing or eating normally
- Sour or bitter taste in the mouth
- Belching
- Excessively salivating
- Tooth erosion





Complications of GERD



If GERD is left untreated it can cause:

- **Esophagitis** (stomach acid causes inflammation and damages the lining of the esophagus.)
- **Barrett's Esophagus** (normal esophageal cells are replaced with abnormal cells. Barret's esophagus is associated with an increased risk of developing esophageal cancer.)
- **Esophageal Cancer**



Things you can do to help

- **Maintain a healthy weight** – excess pounds put pressure on abdomen
- **Stop smoking** – relaxes the lower esophageal sphincter
- **Elevate head of bed by 6 inches** – if you have heartburn while trying to sleep
- **Don't lie down after a meal** – wait at least 3-4 hours
- **Eat food slowly and chew slowly** – put down fork after a bite
- **Avoid trigger foods** – fried or fatty foods, alcohol, chocolate, coffee
- **Avoid tight-fitting clothing** – they put pressure on your abdomen

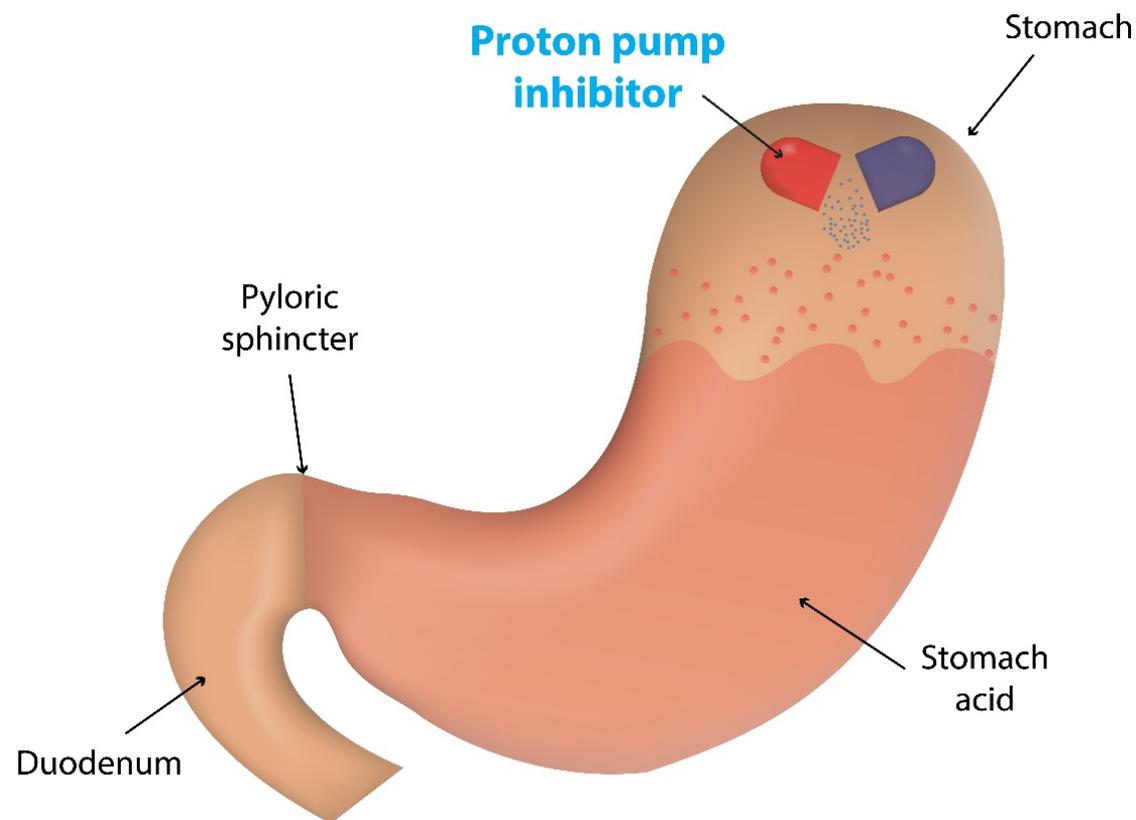


GERD: TREATMENTS

Over the counter options

- **Antacids** that neutralize the acid in the stomach (ex: Mylanta, Rolaids, Tums)
- **H2 receptor blockers** (ex: Tagamet, Pepcid AC, Zantac)
- **Proton Pump Inhibitors(PPI)** stronger acid blockers and allow time for damaged esophageal tissue to heal (ex: Prevacid 24HR, Prilosec OTC, Zegerid OTC)

Proton Pump Inhibitor





GERD: TREATMENTS

Prescription Medications

- **Prescription H2 receptor blockers** (Prescription Pepcid, Zantac)
- **Prescription Proton Pump Inhibitors** – (Prescription Nexium, Prevacid, Prilosec, Zegerid, Protonix, Aciphex, Dexilant)
- **Prescription to strengthen lower esophageal sphincter** – Baclofen may decrease frequency of lower esophageal sphincter

Surgery

- **Nissen Fundoplication** – can be done laparoscopic
- **LINX device** – magnetic beads implanted





GERD: OPTIONS

Consider a Research Study!

Researchers are continuing to study GERD as well as new ways to treat it. Currently, some of our ENCORE research sites have new GERD research studies enrolling. If you or someone you know has GERD, and are interested in participating, call your local office to find out more!

Offices Enrolling:

Inverness: 352-341-2100

<https://inverness.naturecoastresearch.com/activestudies>

Jacksonville: 904-730-0166

<https://jaxresearch.com/activestudies>

