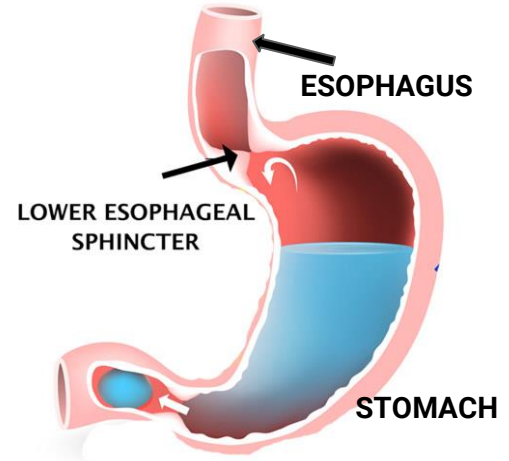


# How Do Lifestyle Changes & Diet Control GERD?

## What is GERD?

GERD or gastroesophageal reflux disease is a chronic condition in which stomach contents flow back into the esophagus. Normally, the circular ring of muscle at the bottom of your esophagus, called the lower esophageal sphincter (LES), contracts to prevent stomach acid from backing up, and relaxes to allow food to enter the stomach. When it relaxes inappropriately, stomach acid splashes back and may cause a burning sensation in your chest known as heartburn.



## Treatment

Treatment plan for GERD varies depending on the frequency and severity of symptoms. It may include a combination of approaches such as lifestyle and diet changes, and medications. If symptoms are severe and cannot be controlled, further testing or surgical treatment might be considered.

## Lifestyle Changes

GERD symptoms can be relieved or prevented if you make these changes:

- **Sit upright for at least 1-2 hours after meals**

Lying down or even bending over after meals can trigger reflux. Sitting upright prevents stomach contents from backing up and promotes stomach emptying.



- **Skip the bedtime snack**

Avoid eating anything for at least 2-3 hours before bed, give your stomach time to empty.

- **Manage your weight**

Obesity increases abdominal pressure and worsens acid reflux.



- **Wear loose and comfortable clothing**

Tight-fitting clothing may increase pressure in the abdomen and cause discomfort.

- **Quit smoking and avoid alcohol**

Nicotine in tobacco and alcohol can stimulate stomach acid production and weaken the LES.



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# How Do Lifestyle Changes & Diet Control GERD?

## Diet Tips

Certain dietary changes can help relieve or prevent worsening of GERD symptoms.

### 1. Eat smaller, more frequent meals

Aim for 4-6 small meals per day instead of three large meals. Large meals increase pressure to the stomach and may trigger reflux.

### 2. Drink slowly

Fluids can fill your stomach up quickly. Drink small amounts throughout the day.

### 3. Limit fats

Fats slow down digestion and make food stay in your stomach longer. Follow these to reduce the amount of fat in your diet:

- Use low fat cooking methods such as steam, boil, and bake
- Choose low or non-fat dairy products
- Eat lean protein instead of high fat meats such as ribs, bacon, sausage, etc.
- Limit added fats such as salad dressings, mayonnaise, sour cream, and cream cheese
- Avoid cream-based soups and sauces
- More home-cooked meals, eat out less

### 1. Stay away from trigger foods

Listed below are foods that may trigger or worsen GERD symptoms:

Foods that relax the LES:  
Caffeine, chocolate,  
peppermint, garlic, and onions



Foods with high acid content:  
Citrus fruits and juices, tomatoes,  
and tomato-based products



Beverages to avoid: Coffee,  
caffeinated tea, carbonated  
beverages, and alcohol



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