

LARYNGOPHARYNGEAL REFLUX **((SILENT ACID REFLUX))**

Laryngopharyngeal reflux (silent reflux) is a condition in which the acids produced in the stomach escape through a valve in the esophagus (or ‘food tube’) and enter high into the throat and voice box. This condition is known as **silent reflux** because most of the symptoms commonly attributable to **gastro-esophageal reflux disease (GERD)** are not present (i.e. heart burn, acid brash, indigestion). This **silent reflux** causes a variety of other symptoms not commonly associated with acid reflux. Those symptoms are **chronic throat clearing, hoarseness or a change in the voice, chronic cough, thick heavy frothy mucus, and recurrent sore throat, fullness in the throat or the sensation that something is stuck in the throat**. For this reason the diagnosis of an acid problem is often overlooked or misdiagnosed. Anything that puts pressure on the stomach, or that increases the amount of acid juices will make your symptoms worse. **Caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, carminatives (mint, peppermint, spearmint) spicy food, acidic food, overeating and greasy foods** contribute to reflux by opening or causing relaxation of the ‘valve’ between the stomach and the esophagus and the esophagus and the voice box allowing the acids to reflux more easily. Lying down also promotes reflux because it is easier for stomach acid to get into the throat. The following is a list of suggestions:

1. **Avoid foods that promote reflux** such as caffeine, nicotine, alcohol, coffee, tea, soft drinks, chocolate, licorice, mints, spicy foods, acidic foods and drinks like orange juice and tomato sauces.
2. **Do not lie down for at least 3 hours** after meals to allow time for the stomach to empty.
3. **Do not eat or drink anything within 3 hours of bedtime** (except for antacids).
4. **Exercise on an empty stomach** and take a dose of antacid before you begin. Exercise promotes reflux because it puts pressure on your stomach. However, don’t let this problem keep you from good exercise.
5. **Avoid tight fitting garments** such as belts, girdles, long-line bras, etc.
6. **Eat 3 regular-sized meals**. Avoid the ‘no breakfast – no lunch – big dinner’ routine.
7. **Lose to your ideal body weight** if you are overweight.
8. **Quit smoking**, there are many medical reasons to quit in addition to reflux.
9. **Raise the head of your bed 4 – 6 inches** so that your feet are lower than your chest. Extra pillows won’t work. Put old telephone books, wood blocks, etc. under the top 2 legs. This is the simplest, most helpful thing that you can do.
10. **Take an antacid 30 minutes – 1 hour after meals and at bedtime**. This will neutralize the stomach acid so that if you do reflux, it will cause less irritation.