

REFLUX INFORMATION SHEET

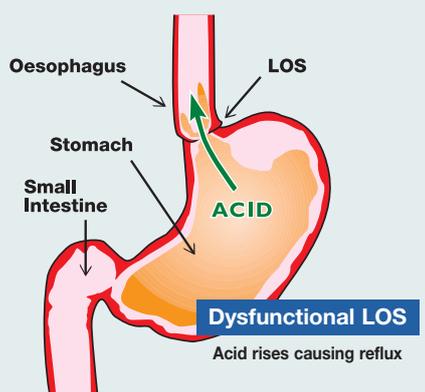
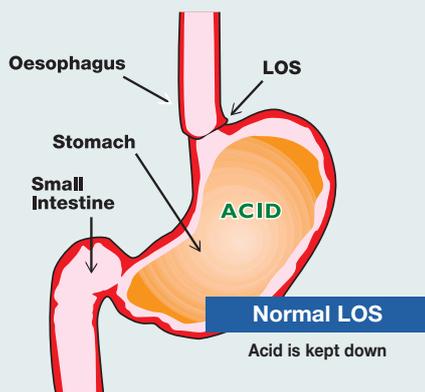


What is Reflux?

The word 'reflux' is used in place of the full medical term Gastro-Oesophageal Reflux Disease (GORD) or oesophageal reflux. GORD occurs when stomach acid rises up into your oesophagus (the food pipe or tube that carries food from your throat to your stomach), causing discomfort. Unlike the stomach lining which is designed to withstand acid, the delicate oesophagus is irritated by it, causing a painful burning sensation known as "heartburn", the main symptom of GORD.

WHAT CAUSES REFLUX?

The lower oesophageal sphincter (LOS) is at the join of the oesophagus and stomach. It is a muscular valve that opens when food is passed from the oesophagus into the stomach. A LOS that does not function properly allows stomach acid to move back into the oesophagus. The more acidic your stomach, the more likely you'll have heartburn pain.



FOODS TO AVOID

- Chocolate
- Peppermint
- Fatty or deep fried food
- Onions, garlic and capsicum
- Coffee and tea
- Alcoholic beverages, especially neat spirits
- Citrus fruit and juices
- Carbonated beverages
- Tomato products
- Spicy foods

TIPS FOR REDUCING HEARTBURN

- Identify what causes your heartburn
- Reduce the size of your portions at mealtime
- Avoid eating within 3 hours of bedtime
- Eat slowly
- Lose excess weight
- Stop cigarette smoking
- Reduce stress

BENEFITS OF SIMPLE EXERCISE AND WEIGHT LOSS

Losing excess weight is not only good for reducing reflux, but is beneficial if you have diabetes or high cholesterol levels.

Even light exercise can help control your weight, lower your blood sugar levels and your cholesterol. It also lowers your risk of heart disease, a condition that is common in people who have diabetes.

Being active helps you feel better both physically and mentally. Most doctors recommend aerobic exercise, like walking, jogging, aerobic dance or bicycling.

If you have problems with the nerves in your feet or legs, your doctor may want you to do a type of exercise that won't put stress on your feet. These exercises may include swimming, bicycling, rowing or chair exercises.

When you start an exercise program, go slowly. Gradually increase the intensity and length of your exercises, as your fitness improves. Increasing your exercise levels can help you to lose excess weight, reduce reflux and better control your sugar and cholesterol levels.

WHEN DOES HEARTBURN OCCUR?

The pressure and burning pain of heartburn can occur frequently and generally become worse after eating, while lying down at night, or when bending over. During the day, frequent heartburn after meals is common for GORD sufferers.

Night-time heartburn is also very common. Heartburn occurs frequently at night because the acid stays in your oesophagus longer when you are lying down. If you are standing, gravity helps to push the acid back into your stomach.

