

Baritz Wellness Center, P.C.

450 Pleasant Street, Brockton, MA 02301 • 508 583-2565 • www.baritzwellness.com

Acid Reflux

04/11/11

According to the US National Institutes of Health¹

Your esophagus is the tube that carries food from your mouth to your stomach. Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) happens when a muscle at the end of your esophagus does not close properly. This allows stomach contents to leak back, or reflux, into the esophagus and irritate it.

You may feel a burning in the chest or throat called heartburn. Sometimes, you can taste stomach fluid in the back of the mouth. This is acid indigestion. If you have these symptoms more than twice a week, you may have GERD. Anyone, including infants and children, can have GERD. If not treated, it can lead to more serious health problems.

Acid Reflux and Anxiety

GERD can cause an anxiety-like reaction and sometimes that is the only symptom. Sometimes symptoms occur at night with one waking feeling anxious and gasping for breath. These symptoms can be quite severe. It is also known that anxiety can trigger GERD directly by influencing the stomach or indirectly by encouraging poor eating habits.

Mechanisms of Action

GERD is the result of insufficient stomach acid. This sounds like a contradiction, but it is not. The stomach needs hydrochloric acid (HCL) to digest food properly. When the stomach becomes HCL deficient, food stays in the stomach too long and putrefies. This produces organic acids, which then cause heartburn and indigestion. Hiatal hernia may be a contributing factor, and when combined with acid reflux may increase tissue damage. Antacids can provide temporary relief by neutralizing stomach acids. However they aggravate the underlying problem because they decrease the stomach's ability to digest food properly.

When stomach acid is reduced the body can experience a gradual decline in health due to mal-absorption of nutrients. For example low stomach acid impairs the body's ability to render calcium suitable for absorption. In one study acid blocker medications were linked to a 160% increase in osteoporosis-related hip fractures in the elderly. Other nutrients mal-absorbed due to low stomach acid include: iron, magnesium, selenium, zinc, folic acid, vitamins A, B1, B6, and E. Decreased stomach acid also weakens the anti-microbial action of the stomach which normally kills food borne bacteria and fungi.

Aims of Treatment

1. Improve lower esophageal sphincter function.
2. Protect the esophagus from exposure to stomach contents and acid.
3. Ensure adequate digestion and gastrointestinal motility.
4. Ease inflammation and encourage tissue healing.
5. Support the body's response to stress.
6. Detox, repair, and fortification.
7. Restoration of gut integrity and health.

To have a custom program created for you or for a free consult call 508 583-2565

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1. www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/gerd.html

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