



Understanding GERD

Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease

What is GERD?

The esophagus has a sphincter (muscle) that normally stays closed, allowing food to move down to the stomach. Sometimes, the sphincter relaxes or weakens, allowing stomach acid to flow back up into the esophagus. This is called gastroesophageal reflux. When this happens often, it is called GERD. Symptoms of GERD include the backflow of stomach acid into the throat and mouth, especially when lying down or sleeping. Other symptoms include a burning feeling in the chest and in the esophagus. Long-term symptoms can also cause difficulty swallowing, chest pain, and a hoarse voice. In some cases, GERD can lead to a condition called Barrett's esophagus, which is a precancerous condition of the esophagus.



The lower esophageal sphincter

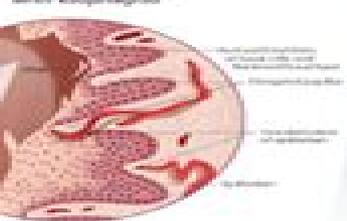
The lower esophageal sphincter (LES) is a ring of muscle that normally stays contracted, preventing stomach acid from flowing back up into the esophagus. When the LES relaxes or weakens, stomach acid can flow back up into the esophagus, causing GERD. This can lead to inflammation and damage to the esophageal lining.



Lower esophageal sphincter (normal)



Esophagitis with esophagitis

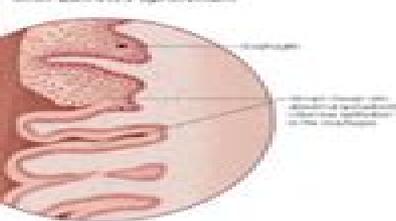


Esophagitis

Esophagitis is inflammation of the lining of the esophagus. It is caused by irritation from stomach acid, infection, or an allergic reaction. Symptoms include heartburn, chest pain, and difficulty swallowing. Treatment includes lifestyle changes and medication.

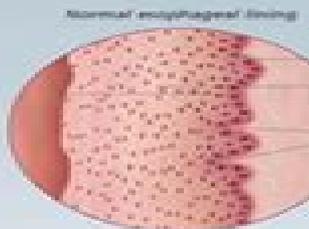


Esophageal lining with Barrett's esophagus



Barrett's esophagus

Barrett's esophagus is a condition in which the lining of the esophagus changes from normal squamous cells to columnar cells. This is a precancerous condition. Symptoms include heartburn and difficulty swallowing. Treatment includes lifestyle changes and medication.



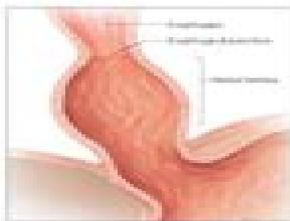
Taking control of GERD

- Eat a balanced diet with less fat, sugar, and caffeine.
- Avoid alcohol, tobacco, and spicy foods.
- Lose weight if you are overweight.
- Don't eat or drink right before going to bed.
- Elevate the head of your bed.
- Avoid tight-fitting clothes and belts.
- Stop smoking.
- Avoid late eating and snacking.
- Chew all of your food thoroughly.
- Avoid lying down after eating.

Stomach acid

Stomach acid is a mixture of hydrochloric acid and other substances. It is produced by the stomach to help break down food. Too much stomach acid can cause GERD.

Gastric gland



Hiatal hernia

Hiatal hernia and GERD

A hiatal hernia occurs when the stomach protrudes through the diaphragm. This can lead to GERD because the stomach acid can flow back up into the esophagus more easily.

Diet and medication

There are several ways to manage GERD. Diet changes, such as eating smaller meals and avoiding trigger foods, can help. Medication, such as proton pump inhibitors and H2 blockers, can also be used. Lifestyle changes, such as losing weight and elevating the head of the bed, can also be helpful.

Understanding Gerd Paper Chart

Ying-Ying Zheng



Understanding Gerd Paper Chart:

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