

Diet for GERD

Gerd is a chronic condition where acid from the stomach backs up into the esophagus. This can lead to discomfort and damage to the lining of the esophagus if left untreated.

Signs and Symptoms of GERD

- Heartburn
- Chest pain
- Sour taste in mouth
- Feeling of a lump in throat
- Difficulty swallowing
- Chronic cough
- Hoarse voice

Food can cause symptoms of GERD by causing the lower esophageal sphincter to relax. When it relaxes, stomach acids can come up the esophagus and sometimes even the throat leading to symptoms of GERD.

Foods That Can Worsen Symptoms of GERD

- Spicy foods
- Citrus fruit (lemon, lime, oranges, grapefruit)
- Tomato products
- Vinegar
- Peppermint
- Black pepper
- Raw garlic and onion
- Chocolate
- High-fat or greasy foods (fried chicken, butter or cream sauces, processed meat, etc.)
- Alcohol
- Caffeine
- Carbonated beverages

Although these foods can worsen symptoms of GERD, they are not guaranteed triggers of your symptoms. Track your food and beverage intake along with your symptoms. Look for patterns of what you ate or drank when symptoms occurred. Start with eliminating the foods or beverages you discover to be likely contributors to your symptoms.

Lifestyle Factors to Improve Symptoms of GERD

- Eat a high-fiber diet
 - Men (Age 19-49: 38 grams; Age 50+: 30 grams daily)
 - Women (Age 19-49: 25 grams; Age 50+: 21 grams daily)
- Avoid eating on the go – sit down and relax while eating
- Eat slowly and chew food well before swallowing
- Take a slow-moderate paced walk after eating

- Stay upright for at least 3 hours after eating
- Stop eating or drinking beverages 3 hours before bed
- Avoid wearing tight fitting clothes that press on your abdomen
- Eat smaller meals rather than large meals
- Stop smoking
- Reduce stress – journal, hike, meditate, yoga, etc.

If you are still struggling to determine what foods or lifestyle factors may be contributing to your GERD symptoms, meet with a gastroenterologist or registered dietitian.

Resources on GERD

1. American Gastroenterological Association - <https://gastro.org/practice-guidance/gi-patient-center/topic/gastroesophageal-reflux-disease-gerd/>
2. Nutrition Guidelines and Diet Restrictions for People with GERD - <https://www.healthline.com/health/gerd-acid-reflux/diet-restrictions>
3. The Acid Reflux Solution: A Cookbook and Lifestyle Guide for Healing Heartburn Naturally by Jorge E. Rodriguez, MD