

tips for managing heartburn (GERD)

Lupus

Heartburn, also referred to as GERD (gastroesophageal reflux disease), commonly occurs in patients with lupus. GERD happens when food and acid from the stomach flow back into the esophagus, the tube that connects the mouth and stomach. This can irritate the lining of the esophagus, and over time may cause damage. This “backwash” is also what causes the chest or heart to feel as if it’s burning. Below are lifestyle and nutrition tips to help reduce the occurrence of GERD and minimize the burning sensation.

TO MINIMIZE SYMPTOMS, LIMIT OR REDUCE THE FOLLOWING FOODS:

Select Fruits & Vegetables

Certain fruits or vegetables may cause symptoms. This will vary per person, but some common examples are:

- Radishes
- Garlic
- Onion

Other Foods

- Alcohol
- Caffeinated beverages (tea, coffee, soda-pop, energy drinks)
- Chocolate
- Limit oils, butter, and shortening to 8 teaspoons per day
- Peppermint and spearmint
- Pepper (hot pepper varieties and ground black pepper)

High-Fat Foods

- Dairy products: Butter, reduced-fat (2%) milk, whole milk, cream, high-fat cheeses, high-fat yogurt, chocolate milk
- Fried meats, bacon, sausage, pepperoni, salami, bologna, hot dogs
- Fried foods (French fries, doughnuts)
- Nuts and nut butters
- Pastries and high-fat desserts

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Consume small, frequent meals during the day
- Eat in a relaxed environment, sit down with a plate and utensils
- Incorporate movement into your routine 3-4 times a week
- Sleep with the head of your bed elevated, using pillows or bed risers
- Try to take a 5-10 minute walk after eating to better digest food
- Wear loose-fitting clothing
- Wait 3 hours after eating before lying down
- Quit smoking, or don’t start smoking