



# Gastro Oesophageal Reflux Disease (GORD)

## What is GORD?

**GORD** is a chronic condition where the acid contents of the stomach reflux (back up) into the oesophagus or gullet. This frequently causes a burning sensation in the chest that is often called **heartburn**.

The acid can also enter the mouth and throat and cause inflammation of the larynx and pharynx. This can lead to damage to the teeth, swallowing problems, voice problems, asthma, chronic cough, bronchitis and in some cases pneumonia.



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## What lifestyle modifications can help?

1. Decrease or eliminate the following foods and drinks:
  - Caffeinated drinks
  - Fizzy and acidic drinks, eg. cola, orange juice tea, wine and beer
  - Chocolate
  - Alcohol
  - Fatty foods
2. Loose weight if you are over weight
3. Avoid large meals - Eat your daily food intake in 6 small meals rather than 3 large ones.
4. Don't smoke
5. Don't eat or drink for 3 hours before going to bed
6. Elevate the head of your bed by 15 ml, or 6 inches. This can be done by placing bricks under the head of the bed, or by placing a wedge shaped pillow on top of the mattress to elevate the head and shoulders.
7. Avoid wearing tight clothing around the waist
8. Make time for physical activities, like a walk around the block

## What are the medical treatment options?

Consultation with your Doctor for medical management of GORD is important. There a range of approaches that may be recommended:

- Proton pump inhibitors provide the most complete and sustained suppression of gastric acid secretion.
- H<sub>2</sub> antagonists suppress the amount of acid in your stomach and are often used for milder cases of oesophagitis.
- Medications which assist gastric emptying are sometimes used.
- Over the counter antacid medications are sometimes used as a supplementary medication.
- Antibiotics may be used to treat underlying helicobacter pylori infection
- Elimination or reduction of drugs known to contribute to GORD symptoms, eg. painkillers such as aspirin and ibuprofen, calcium channel blockers prescribed for high blood pressure, tricyclic antidepressants, nitrates and anticholinergics

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