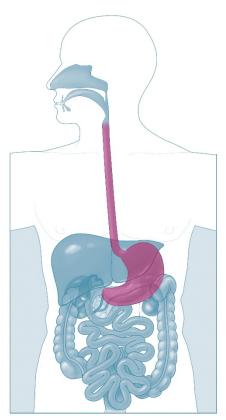
## **GASTROESOPHAGEAL REFLUX DISEASE (GERD)**

## What Is Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD)?

- Gastroesophageal reflux, or just reflux, happens when what is inside your stomach — stomach acid, food or other contents —backs up out of the stomach into the esophagus (the tube that links your mouth and stomach) and possibly all the way into your throat and mouth.
- When that acid touches your esophagus (or what feels like your throat), it can cause a burning feeling in your chest or neck, known as heartburn.

*Note:* Heartburn is not the same as dyspepsia (indigestion). Ask your doctor for more information on dyspepsia.

- Most of us will have occasional heartburn, but when your symptoms are frequent and bad enough to impact your sense of well-being, it could be GERD.
- Heartburn is the most common symptom of GERD.





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- While GERD is not life threatening, it can greatly lower your quality of life by impacting your daily activities, your sleep and what you are able to eat.
- Heartburn can often be avoided through changing certain habits (like when, how much and what you eat and drink).
- Occasional heartburn can be treated with over-the-counter (OTC) medication.
- If symptoms don't go away or get worse after a few weeks, talk to a gastroenterologist. You may need some tests to rule out other health issues.



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