

Gastric Reflux G.E.R.D

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By Dr. Derek Conte

Do you have GERD, Gastro Esophageal Reflux Disease --- burning in your chest and throat? Maybe you've seen the doctor and he's cleared you of concerns about your heart and maybe now you're on meds for gastric reflux? It's a common ailment. Millions of people in the US who suffer from the painful regurgitation of stomach acid into the esophagus take a variety of drugs to get relief.

Think of the stomach as a soft, leather sac with tubes at each end, one flowing in and one flowing out, and clamps on the tubes to keep the sac from leaking. When you eat and drink, food and liquids slide down the first tube (the esophagus) past the muscular dome of the diaphragm, where the first clamp opens to let food into the stomach and then closes tight. The stomach now releases very strong hydrochloric acid into the food and begins peristaltic waves that mix and break the contents down for absorption. When the food is ready to go to the small intestine the second clamp opens and small amounts are allowed to pass. These clamps I refer to are really known as sphincters, which are strong, circular muscles that open and close like a camera iris and act as regulators to the flow of many things in our bodies: water, blood, food, even light, in the eyes. If the cardiac sphincter (the first one) is not tight, upward leaking occurs and the acidic mix burns the esophagus.

The causes of GERD are various. Sometimes a sphincter can become incompetent and slack. Since they are under neurological control, a precise chiropractic adjustment can often help. Hiatal hernias are structural problems and can be caused by a steering wheel injury, a hard hit in football, just horsing around or even by pregnancy. In this case the cardiac sphincter is driven *above* the diaphragm, which then squeezes **below** the sphincter causing the reflux. Here, an adjustment to the area of the solar plexus may be very helpful to reduce, control or even eliminate the reflux altogether.

Consult your local chiropractor for details. While medication or surgery may be necessary, you may be happy to find it isn't.

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