

TAMING GASTRIC REFLUX

By Dr. Derek Conte

Think of the stomach as a soft, leather wine gourd and tubes with clamps at either end to keep the wine from leaking. When you eat, food slides down the first tube, the esophagus, past the diaphragm where the first clamp opens to let food into the stomach and then closes tight. The stomach now releases a strong (hydrochloric) acid and mixes the food with it. When the food is ready to go to the small intestine the second clamp opens and small amounts are allowed to pass. If the first clamp is not tight, leaking occurs and burns the esophagus. Sphincters (the clamps) are strong, circular muscles that act as regulators of the flow of water, blood, food, light (in the eyes), etc. in our bodies.

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. The causes of GERD (gastrointestinal reflux disease) are



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various. The cardiac sphincter (the first clamp) becomes weak due to slippage (hernia), tightness or looseness which allows the powerful gastric juice to infiltrate and burn the esophagus. If there is a hernia, the sphincter is situated *above* the diaphragm which squeezes the stomach below the sphincter and this causes the reflux too.

Hernias are structural problems and can be caused by a steering wheel injury, a hard hit in football or even pregnancy. Strictures (tightness) or flaccidity (looseness) of sphincters are muscular tonal problems and can be caused by nerve interference or stress.

Chiropractic can help immensely in certain cases. Ask your chiropractor about what he can do to improve or eliminate the problem.

Dr. Derek Conte is co-founder of the new Chiropractic Specialists of Smyrna on Concord rd. and is available to speak to your group, free of charge. Questions? Call: 404-784-6008.