

What to Eat and Avoid with GERD (Acid Reflux)

If YOU have GERD...

If you have gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), *how* you eat is almost as important as *what* you eat. That means slow it down, no late-night snacks, and don't hit the hay right after meals. But choosing food wisely is also key. You can curb your GERD by opting for a low-fat, high-fiber diet that's heavy on whole grains, fruits and vegetables, and lean meats. Over-the-counter antacids and prescription medications are the most common treatments for acid reflux/gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). Regardless of how bad your GERD symptoms are, successfully fighting heartburn and acid reflux also requires some changes in lifestyle, ranging from the food you eat to the clothes you wear.

Use this list of foods to reduce acid reflux:

- Oatmeal: If you have GERD, high-fat food is usually a recipe for pain. Instead choose oatmeal. It's a low-fat, high-fiber meal that can soothe your stomach. Top it off with sliced bananas, which are thought to fight stomach acid naturally.
- Ginger: Fresh ginger acts as an anti-inflammatory and is an age-old remedy for stomach problems of all kinds. You can get your daily dose—2 to 4 grams (more than that can actually *cause* heartburn)—by steeping ginger in hot water to make tea, chewing a piece of ginger, or using ginger generously when you cook.
- Pasta: Tomatoes and heavy sauces are a no-no for people with GERD—which rules out a lot of classic Italian dishes (unfortunately). For those with a craving for pasta, the National Heartburn Alliance recommends thin, broth-like sauces. And using a whole-wheat pasta will boost your fiber intake.
- Beans: Certain fatty meats, such as ground beef, are thought to trigger heartburn. Beans are an excellent source of protein and fiber and a great alternative to meat. If you have GERD, they should be a regular feature in your diet.
- Applesauce: Butter and oil are known to trigger heartburn, but that doesn't mean you have to forgo all your favorite foods. Just substitute applesauce for oil, which will reduce fat and add a shot of fiber to baked goods. A common rule of thumb—use the same amount of applesauce (in cups) as the recipe calls for in oil, but you may need to fine-tune some recipes to get the consistency just right.

- **Also try to avoid:** Chocolate, caffeine, Citrus fruits, alcohol, spicy foods, fatty red meat, fried foods, raw onion, tomatoes, butter, and oil

Do these things to reduce GERD

- BIG Meals are often a trigger for GERD symptoms, even buffet meals. In fact, all-you-can-eat buffets are almost always a recipe for heartburn. A full stomach can cause the valve between your stomach and esophagus to relax, pushing stomach acids back up into the esophagus. Therefore, eat frequent small meals throughout the day. (Don't make that last meal too late, though: Eating close to bedtime can trigger GERD symptoms as well.)
- Avoid alcohol
- Weight management
- Avoid tight clothes- skip the belts, waistbands, hosiery, and undergarments that may be too tight.
- Sleep elevated with multiple pillows
- Quit smoking
- Other: Here are some less obvious heartburn triggers, including fish oil supplements, peppermint, and prescription medications.

By Bariatric Educator: Juliana Cavaleri