

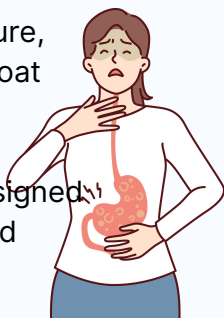
GERD BASICS + SIMPLE FIXES

What is GERD


GERD (Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease) happens when stomach acid moves up into the esophagus.


This causes burning, pressure, sour taste, coughing, or throat tightness.


Your esophagus is NOT designed for acid — so it gets irritated quickly.




Why It Happens

 **LES Relaxation:** The lower esophageal sphincter (LES) can loosen when it shouldn't.

 **Pressure:** Large meals or bloating push acid upward.

 **Lying down too soon:** Gravity stops helping.

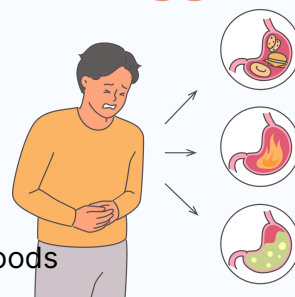
 **Trigger foods:** Some foods naturally relax the LES or increase acidity.

When to Reach Out to a Doctor

- ✓ Trouble swallowing
- ✓ Food feels stuck
- ✓ Unintentional weight loss
- ✓ Frequent vomiting
- ✓ Black stools
- ✓ Severe nighttime symptoms
- ✓ No improvement with lifestyle changes

Common GERD Triggers

- Large meals
- Coffee
- Spicy foods
- Chocolate
- Citrus
- Tomatoes
- Fried or fatty foods
- Alcohol
- Eating too close to bedtime
- Stress + anxiety



Simple Things That Help (That Actually Work!)

1. Stay upright 2–3 hours after eating
Lying down makes reflux significantly worse.
2. Smaller, more frequent meals
Large meals increase pressure on the LES.
3. Light movement after meals
A short walk helps acid stay in the stomach.
4. Elevate your head at night
Use a wedge pillow or elevate the top of the bed.
5. Identify & reduce trigger foods
Everyone's trigger map is different — keep notes!
6. Don't eat right before bed
Aim for at least 3 hours between your last meal and sleep.

