

## **GERD NUTRITION & LIFESTYLE THERAPY**

Gastroesophageal reflux disease, also called GERD or reflux disease, is often aggravated by dietary and other lifestyle factors. If you suffer from reflux, there are many simple changes you can make to help reduce acid production in your stomach as well as the flow of acid back up to the esophagus.

- **Avoid substances that can increase acid production in the stomach**

- o Citrus fruits and juices
- o High-fat foods- fried foods and full-fat dairy products
- o Peppers/onions (for some people)
- o Spicy foods (for some people)
- o Processed tomato products
- o Large portion sizes of any food

- **Avoid substances that can promote flow of acid to esophagus**

- o Alcohol
- o Caffeine (chocolate, coffee, soda, tea)
  - \* Spicy foods
- o Chocolate
- o Peppermint
- o Spearmint
- o Tobacco

### **Lifestyle Recommendations:**

- Avoid smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, and use of aspirin and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDS) unless absolutely necessary to ease GI irritation.
- Do not lie down within 3 hours of eating; maintain an upright and relaxed position until all food is digested. Avoid drinking excess liquids with meals (no more than 4-6oz).
- Manage weight; avoid abdominal fat.
- Manage stress and emotions with calming stress reduction techniques, relaxation, and emotional support.

- Review lab work including insulin levels, abnormal blood glucose, LFTs (liver function tests), GGT (glutathione), and genetic variances in detoxification pathways, and methylation pathways, and address food sensitivities.
  - Consider a comprehensive digestive analysis to rule out dysbiosis or fungal overgrowth. SIBO testing and GI MAP stool test are most valuable.
- Move daily to stimulate optimal digestion and elimination. Take a light walk after a meal to support digestion.
- Stay well-hydrated – 80-100oz/day of filtered water.

### **Additional Tips and Caveats:**

- Limit sugar, soy, and fried foods; avoid allergenic foods like wheat and dairy products that can increase mucus production; lower carbohydrate diets may assist with improvement of symptoms
- Eat smaller meals and do not graze – Eat every 3-5 hours – Fast 12 hours overnight
  - *If it works with your lifestyle and appetite cues – may consider extended intermittent fasting with 12-16 hour fast overnight.*
- Do not multi-task while eating; make sure dining environment is peaceful and uncluttered
- Avoid high fat processed foods, spicy foods, mint, chocolate, coffee, black tea and acidic drinks can all contribute to symptoms.
- Do not rush your meals. Thoroughly chew your food and take time to enjoy each bite. Recommend taking a “pause” before eating to give thanks for the food or list 5 things you are grateful for. Also 3-5 minutes of deep belly breathing before meals will help stimulate the Vagus nerve for improved digestion.
- Consider increasing consumption of organic green vegetables and fresh fruits especially cooked cruciferous vegetables that supply beneficial isothiocyanates (or their precursor glucosinolates) and the stimulation of the bitter receptors to modulate healthy gut bacteria.
  - *To help tolerate fibers consider soaking and/or sprouting your grains, nuts, and seeds. (Refer to handout)*