

## Facts About Acid Reflux

Every day, countless people suffer from an uncomfortable and potentially harmful condition called acid reflux. Due to poor diet and lifestyle choices, acid reflux is a very common occurrence, but it is easily preventable.

Acid reflux affects at least thirty five percent of all overweight people, and is a serious issue for a vast majority of the general population. By understanding the condition, every one of these people will have the power to avoid triggering the effects of acid reflux.

\* More than sixty million Americans will experience heartburn due to acid reflux at least once per month. That number represents roughly one fifth of the entire population of the United States. Also, approximately twenty five million Americans, or one twelfth of the total American population, will experience the harmful effects of heartburn and/or acid reflux on a daily basis.

\* Heartburn is technically "incurable"; however, there are steps that can take to help offset your chances of developing the condition. If you worry that you are at risk for an acid reflux condition, it's important to review the types of foods that you're presently eating, and then take steps to change your habits. Fewer acid-creating foods means fewer acid reflux attacks.

\* Smoking and alcohol are big contributors to the acid reflux problem. Regular smokers will find that the acidity levels in their stomachs are increased, causing the reflux that is already occurring to cause even more damage to the esophagus. Nicotine is also known to relax the lower esophageal sphincter muscle. This muscle, when operating incorrectly, is one of the leading contributors to the acid reflux condition. Alcohol can also weaken the lower esophageal sphincter, causing it to relax and allowing reflux to creep into the esophagus.

\* Acid reflux is a disease that can affect anybody. There are, however, certain demographics that face a higher risk of developing the condition. Overweight people have pressure on their stomach while sleeping, created by the weight of the abdomen. This pressure can weaken the lower esophageal sphincter to the point where acid reflux occurs. This same risk also occurs in pregnant women, with the additional weight of the baby adding pressure to the stomach. Elderly individuals also need to watch their lifestyle habits to ensure that they do not become afflicted with acid reflux.

\* When left untreated, acid reflux can lead to more serious consequences. When acid reflux is a consistent problem, then acid will be found continuously in the throat. This can cause major medical problems including esophageal strictures, Barrett's esophagus, erosive esophagitis, and in the most extreme and rare cases, esophageal cancer.

\* Acid reflux can affect not only your physical health, but your mental well being as well. Roughly eighty percent of all acid reflux sufferers will experience symptoms of the disease at night. In about seventy five percent of these cases, the person will actually wake up because of his or her heartburn. This interrupted sleep can cause serious daytime problems including increased irritability and lack of concentration, which may lead to decreased productivity at work and even motor vehicle accidents.

Prevention is indeed the best medicine, particularly in the case of acid reflux. The more you know about the disease, the more power you have over preventing it or lessening the effects on your health.