The Symptoms

What is Reflux?

Our stomachs naturally produce acid to digest food. Sometimes this acid flows back into the esophagus, the tube connecting the throat to the stomach. When this occurs frequently and persistently, it is called Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD). The common symptom is heartburn, a burning sensation in the chest caused by acid reflux in the esophagus. Stomach acid can also be refluxed into the throat, a condition called Laryngopharyngeal Reflux (LPR). LPR can occur without heartburn, making it difficult to diagnose. This is why it is sometimes referred to as a “silent” disease.

Common Symptoms

• Hoarseness, especially in the morning
• Chronic throat clearing or persistent cough
• Chronic sore throat
• A feeling of something caught in throat
• Excessive mucus/post nasal drip
• Difficulty swallowing
• Restless sleep

Ask Your Doctor

How Serious is Reflux?

A small amount of reflux is normal. The esophagus can handle acid exposure better than the throat, where the tissue is much more sensitive. If LPR is left untreated, it can cause serious damage to the tissues of the throat, upper airway and the lungs. LPR can also lead to serious problems including vocal cord nodules, subglottic stenosis (airway narrowing), granulomas, and even cancer. In addition, LPR can exacerbate asthma and sinusitis.

How is Reflux Diagnosed

Your doctor will ask a series of questions about your symptoms to determine if reflux may be causing your discomfort. It is important to tell your doctor about any habits you have or medications you are currently taking. Your doctor may proceed with an examination of your throat to check for signs of swelling and redness, granulomas, and polyps. Your doctor may perform a 24 hour pH study to more accurately diagnose your condition and develop a treatment path.

The Test

Restech Dx-pH Test

One diagnostic test that your doctor may perform is with the Dx-pH System. It is a simple, comfortable test to detect acid reaching your airway. This is done with a small tube (about the size of a piece of spaghetti) that has a sensor at the tip. It is placed through your nose until the tip is in the back of your throat, high enough so that you don't feel it when you talk, eat, drink or swallow. The sensor collects pH data and sends it to a small recorder that you wear on your belt or over your shoulder. During the test period (up to 24 or 48 hours) you can eat normal meals, go to work, and even exercise. The Dx System will track your pH levels and documents the frequency and severity of your reflux. With the press of a button, you can track your meals, symptoms, and sleep times. This information will help your doctor correlate your symptoms and any reflux you are having.
How is Reflux Treated?

Based on the severity of your symptoms, a visual examination, and your pH study results, your doctor will prescribe the most appropriate therapy. Treatment ranges from lifestyle modifications for mild cases of reflux to more aggressive therapy with medication for moderate to severe reflux. In extreme cases, surgery may be recommended.

Start Feeling Better Now

These simple and healthy lifestyle modifications can be started immediately:

- Avoid eating within three hours of bedtime
- Eliminate or limit problematic foods, e.g. spicy, high in fat, caffeinated or carbonated beverages, alcohol, chocolate, citrus and tomato-based foods
- Avoid wearing tight-fitting clothing, especially around the waist
- Lose weight if you are overweight
- If you smoke – quit

Medications

Please follow the instructions below (unless told otherwise by your doctor)

- **Seven Days Prior: Discontinue:**
  - Prevacid (lansoprazole)
  - Prilosec (omeprazole)
  - Aciphex (rabeprazole)
  - Nexium (esomeprazole)
  - Protonix ( pantoprazole)

- **Three Days Prior: Discontinue:**
  - Over the counter antacids (Axid, Zantac, Pepcid, Tagamet)
  - Carafate
  - Reglan

- **Midnight the night before: Discontinue:**
  - All Antacids (Maalox, Tums, Mylanta, Gaviscon, Rolaid)

- **12 hours before the test, do not take sedatives such as Valium (diazepam), Xanax (alprazolam)**

- **Please avoid antacid use during this study so the physician can get an accurate reading of what is truly going on in the esophagus**

- **24 hours after procedure**, return to the clinic for probe removal

Eating and Drinking

- Do not eat or drink anything 6 hours before the test
- Do not wear perfume or cologne
- There are no diet restrictions after the test so you can eat what you want. Please avoid constant drinking or snacking for long periods of time. You will record everything that you eat and drink.
- Absolutely no gum or mints are allowed during the test
- **NO SMOKING** 6 hours before or during the test
- No make-up should be worn during the test