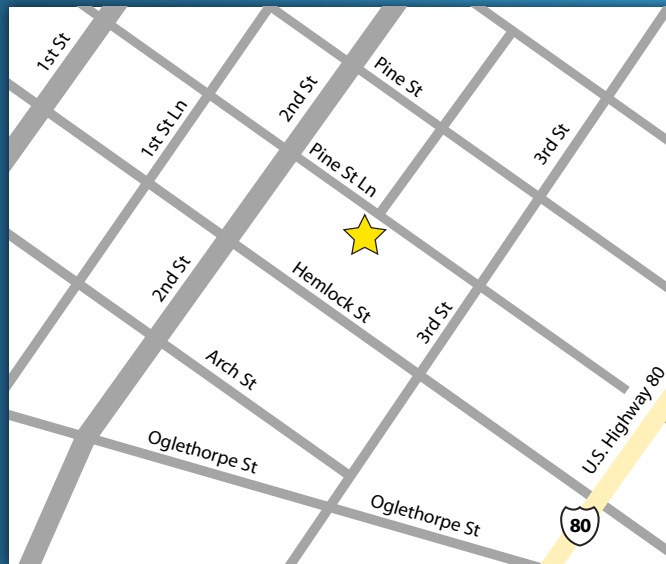




About the ENT Center of Central Georgia

The ENT Center of Central Georgia brings together the very best physicians and support staff dedicated to providing you an exceptional patient experience. In our pursuit to provide excellence in medical treatment, we listen to our patients and focus on their symptoms. We develop individualized treatment plans based on your unique needs and treat you like we would a family member. Whether you have hearing problems, allergies, dizziness, sinus infections, snoring, or any other ear, nose, and throat related problem, we can help.

For more information, contact one of the elite health care professionals at The ENT Center of Central Georgia today: 1-800-253-8953

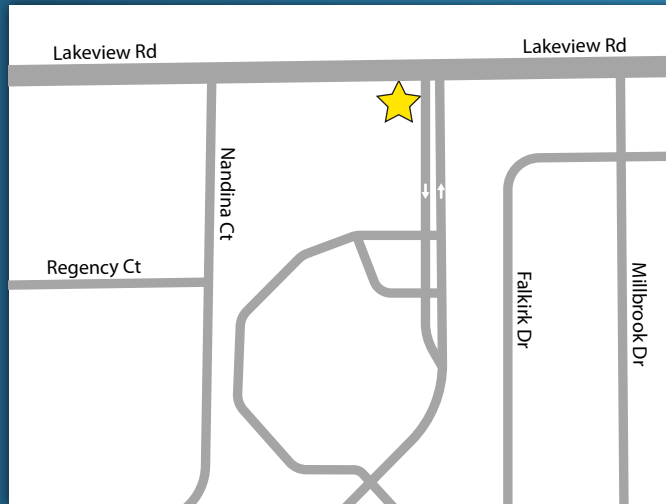


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The ENT Center of Central Georgia

Our Doctors Explain: **ACID REFLUX**



www.theentcenter.com



What Is Acid Reflux?

Gastroesophageal, or “acid” reflux, is a chronic disease that occurs when stomach contents flow back (reflux) into the food pipe (esophagus). One of the most common digestive disorders, otherwise known as ‘acid reflux,’ it’s usually caused by a failure of the muscle valve (called the lower esophageal sphincter) between the stomach and the esophagus to close properly. The backwash of stomach acid irritates the lining of the lower esophagus and causes the symptom of heartburn.

Normally, following a meal, a valve on your esophagus—the sphincter—closes, preventing hydrochloric acid produced in the digestive process from backing up (refluxing) into the esophagus. When reflux occurs, this valve fails to seal properly, and the stomach contents flow freely into the throat and esophagus. This damages the esophageal lining and causes a variety of painful symptoms.

Other risk factors can help to exacerbate the condition. These include eating large meals or lying down afterward, eating certain foods (spicy and fatty foods, citrus, tomato, chocolate, mint, garlic and onions), drinking certain beverages (alcohol, caffeine, carbonated liquids), smoking, obesity and pregnancy.

What Are the Symptoms of Acid Reflux?

Heartburn is most commonly associated with GERD. Also known as acid indigestion, this burning pain radiates from the stomach to the abdomen and chest, and may last for up to two hours after a meal. It is frequently accompanied by regurgitation, a sour taste in the mouth, and dyspepsia or general stomach discomfort. Other symptoms often include belching, bloating, coughing, wheezing, hoarseness and nausea.

Symptoms occur most frequently after eating, when lying down or when bending over. They are most common at night. The most common cause of GERD is a hiatal hernia, a stomach abnormality that causes the sphincter valve and upper portion of the stomach to move above the diaphragm, allowing stomach acids to reflux more easily.

How Is Acid Reflux Diagnosed?

Your doctor will ask questions about your medical history and symptoms. You may be diagnosed with GERD based on that evaluation or by taking medicine to see if your symptoms improve. Your doctor may also need to look within your esophagus. This is done by passing a long, thin tube called an endoscope through your mouth and stomach to learn more about what’s going on inside your body.



How Is Acid Reflux Treated?

An effective way to treat acid reflux is to avoid the triggers that cause painful heartburn and other symptoms.

Stay away from foods and beverages that are likely to cause a negative reaction—e.g., coffee, citrus fruits, processed tomatoes, etc. Change your eating habits: stick with smaller, more frequent meals, and avoid eating too closely to bedtime. Quit smoking and ask your doctor if the medications you are taking might be responsible for your symptoms. If you are overweight, exercise to take off excess pounds.

Over-the-counter antacids taken immediately after meals will help neutralize stomach acids and can prevent heartburn from occurring or relieve the symptoms. For serious cases that do not respond to medical treatment, surgery may be recommended.