

IN THE PINK OF HEALTH

THE PINK PAGE

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BREAK UP WITH CONSTANT HEARTBURN OR ACIDITY.

It's a brand new year, but if you've been suffering from GERD, you may have decided to skip the parties. Going to bed dreading the next morning's usual bout of acidity, or carrying an antacid whenever going out for a meal, are common signs of GERD. Heartburn and acid reflux are digestive discomforts most people experience from time to time. However, when these conditions occur at least twice a week and interfere with one's daily life, it could be GERD.

GERD, or Gastroesophageal reflux disease, is a chronic digestive illness that occurs when stomach acid, or occasionally bile, flows back into the esophagus, causing irritation in its tissue lining, as well as inflammation. When it comes to GERD, it seems easy to slip the problem under the rug with a few over-the-counter pills. However, it should not be taken lightly, as it can lead to further complications such as esophageal ulcer or stricture.

How can I tell if I have GERD?

Visit a doctor if you experience any of the following symptoms frequently: Heartburn, chest pain, dry cough, sore throat, regurgitation of food or sour liquid, sensation of a lump in the throat or difficulty swallowing.

It is important to note that smoking, obesity, diabetes, asthma or hiatal hernia can increase your risk of getting GERD. Pregnant women especially need to be careful as they have an increased chance of developing

GERD. However, diagnosis and treatment are fairly simple. In most cases, heartburn and other symptoms are enough for the doctor to make a diagnosis.

What is the treatment for GERD?

People experiencing GERD symptoms can take over-the-counter medications, though these offer only temporary relief. If your condition is severe, you may have to undergo endoscopy, ambulatory acid (pH) test or an esophageal motility test. A holistic combination of medical treatment and lifestyle changes is your best bet for a long-term effect.

Simple lifestyle changes may help in reducing the frequency of symptoms. Maintaining a healthy weight, avoiding tight-fitting clothes, steering clear of heartburn-inducing foods (fried foods, tomatoes, citrus fruits, chocolate, garlic and onions), and quitting smoking and alcohol are some of the most recommended changes. Other changes may be eating smaller meals, not lying down after a meal, and elevating the head of your bed. It's good to include foods like oatmeal, beans, yoghurt, pineapples, papayas, and whole grains (brown rice) into your diet, as they help in combating GERD.

Arrive prepared and make the most of your consultation time with your doctor. This leads to a faster diagnosis and a speedy recovery.

Smoothielicious!

Ginger-Banana Energizer Shake

For a little short-term GERD relief, try out this easy recipe.

Ingredients :

- ½ tsp. ginger (freshly peeled and finely grated)
- 2 ripe bananas
- 2 cups milk
- 1 cup yoghurt or low-fat fresh cream
- 2 tbsp. honey (optional)

How to make it:

1. In a blender, add the bananas, ginger, milk and yogurt/fresh cream.
2. Blend until it reaches a smooth consistency.
3. If needed, add honey and serve.



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