

Laryngopharyngeal Reflux Disease (LPR)

Your doctor has diagnosed you as having Laryngopharyngeal Reflux Disease or LPR. This condition develops when stomach acid travels up into your throat. Although you may experience “heartburn” or “indigestion”, many of our patients do not have these complaints. Some of the more common symptoms seen in the head and neck include: sensation of drainage down the back of the throat or excessive mucus, feeling of something caught in throat (often a tickling or burning sensation), chronic cough, sore throat, hoarseness, and occasional difficulty swallowing.

Treatment of LPR

One of the first things you must do is to make some changes in your lifestyle. Many foods and drinks can make your symptoms worse and it is important that those be eliminated. In addition, being overweight, smoking, and drinking alcohol are all factors that worsen reflux disease. It is important to work on these areas as well.

1. **CUT OUT CAFFEINE.** Specifically, avoid coffee (highest caffeine content), tea and caffeinated soft drinks.
2. **AVOID CHOCOLATE AND MINTS.**
3. **AVOID ALCOHOL,** especially late in the evening and before bedtime.
4. **QUIT SMOKING.**
5. **ELIMINATE FRIED AND FATTY FOODS FROM YOUR DIET.** A low-fat diet is the best way to avoid reflux.
6. If you are overweight, **LOSE WEIGHT.** Avoid tight-fitting clothing.
7. **STOP EATING AT LEAST 3 HOURS BEFORE GOING TO BED.** Eating a heavy meal just before going to sleep is especially bad for your reflux condition.
8. **ELEVATE THE HEAD OF YOUR BED 4-6 INCHES** by placing wood or cinder blocks under the headboard. This is important if your reflux occurs at night. Placing several pillows under your head does not substitute for raising the head of the bed; in fact, this maneuver can make the problem worse.
9. **TAKE THE MEDICINES THAT YOUR DOCTOR HAS PRESCRIBED FOR YOU.** Prilosec or Prevacid. These medications totally turn off the acid, whereas Zantac and Pepcid just turn acid production down. You will need to be on the medicines a minimum of 3-6 months.

The important thing to remember about reflux disease is that most often, it is a chronic problem that has been causing changes in your body over several weeks to months (sometimes years). Because of this, it may take a while before the symptoms improve or go away. It is important to stick with the recommendations listed above and to keep taking the medication your doctor prescribed for you. If your condition worsens while you are on these medications, please contact your doctor.