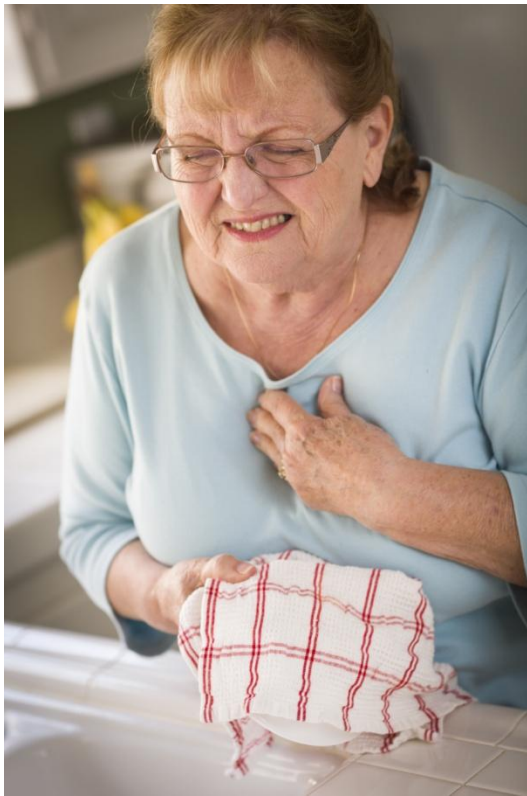


DR. CHRISTOPHER'S Herbal Legacy Newsletter

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Acid Reflux Amy Willis, M.H.

Acid reflux is very common and affects around 50% of Americans. The main symptom of acid reflux is heartburn, which at times can be severe enough to feel like an heart attack. Acid reflux is thought to be caused by excessive amounts of acid, and anti-acids are usually prescribed, yet this actually compounds the problem.



After food passes through the esophagus to the stomach, a muscular valve called the lower esophageal sphincter (LES) closes, preventing food or acid from moving back up. Acid reflux occurs when the LES relaxes, allowing acid from the stomach to flow backward into the esophagus. It is important to understand that acid reflux is not caused by excessive acid production in the stomach, but a symptom related to Hiatal Hernia and/or Helicobacter pylori (H. pylori) infection. Hiatal hernia can be adjusted by a skilled chiropractor. Many who have a Hiatal Hernia, also have H. pylori, which cause a chronic low-level inflammation of the stomach. In the early 1980's, Dr. Barry Marshall speculated that H. pylori is a major factor in acid reflux.

Drugs can also cause heartburn. Common ones include antidepressants, osteoporosis drugs, antibiotics, blood pressure medication, nitroglycerin, and pain relievers. Drugs are never safe. It is best to use herbs and natural remedies that produce health,

as much as possible.

Proton pump inhibitors (PPIs) are commonly prescribed for acid reflux/heartburn. These effectively block acid production in the stomach. This is extremely detrimental. There are over 16,000 articles in medical literature showing that suppressing stomach acid does not address the problem. When the amount of acid in the stomach is suppressed, the body's ability to kill the H. bacteria is decreased, and can make the condition worse. Furthermore, reducing stomach acid diminishes the primary defense mechanism for food-borne infections, which will increase

the risk of food poisoning. PPI drugs also cause serious side effects, such as, pneumonia, bone loss, hip fractures, and infection.

There are several things that can help heal the body, primarily the stomach and intestinal tract. The first thing to do is to clean up the diet; get rid of the junk food and eat health producing foods.

Fermented Foods: kimchi, miso, yoghurt, kefir, Chutneys, etc. This comes at the top of the list. These foods, among others, are high in probiotics. If you do not regularly eat these foods, you need to supplement with a good quality probiotic.

High-quality salt: Himalayan salt is a good choice. The body needs the chloride to make hydrochloric acid.

Raw apple cider vinegar/ honey: 1 Tbsp. of each mixed in water, taken 3 times a day, has been helpful for those who are trying to increase hydrochloric acid and improve digestion.

Sauerkraut or cabbage juice: Stimulates the body to produce stomach acid. Take 1-4 tsp before eating.

Ginger: Chew on fresh root or make a tea with fresh or powdered. Shown to suppress H. pylori and prevent formation of ulcers.

Slippery Elm: Coats and soothes from the mouth all through the whole intestinal tract. Contains antioxidants that can help address inflammatory bowel conditions. Stimulates nerve endings in the gastrointestinal tract. This helps increase mucus secretion, which protects against ulcers and excess acidity. Take 1 tsp. in water 3 x a day.

Baking Soda: 1/2 - 1 tsp. of baking soda in 8 oz. of water can ease the burn of acid reflux. DO NOT do this on a regular basis, but only in an emergency when you are in a lot of pain.

Amy Willis is a Master Herbalist graduate from the School of Natural Healing. Visit her website, www.herbs4you.org and sign up for her newsletter. She can also be reached via email at amywil@msn.com or call 605-254-1437. She is located in Sioux Falls, South Dakota.