



**What is reflux?**

Gastro-esophageal reflux happens when acid from the stomach splashes up into the tube that carries food from the throat to the stomach (esophagus).

This can happen when the muscle between the esophagus and stomach (lower esophageal sphincter or LES ) relaxes. Normally, this muscle stays tightly closed, only opening to allow food and liquid into the stomach. When it relaxes and stays open, stomach acid can splash up.

**Reflux can cause:**

- heartburn (a feeling of burning in the chest)
- chest pain
- bitter taste in the mouth
- vomiting
- hoarse throat
- cough
- shortness of breath
- loss of tooth enamel

**Are there certain foods that make reflux worse?**

Yes—foods that are very spicy, acidic or high in fat can make reflux worse.

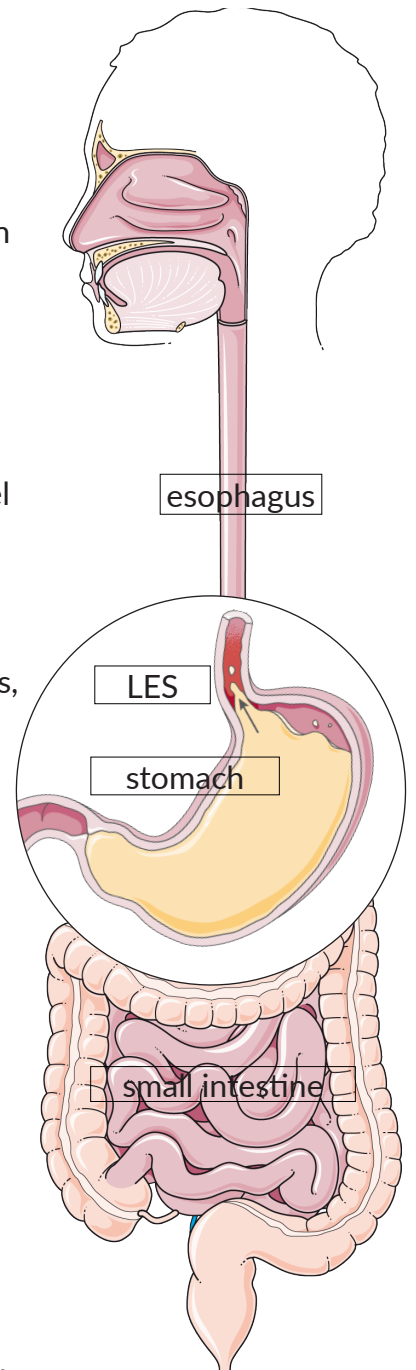
Avoid giving:

- tomatoes
- chocolate
- mint
- citrus fruits (oranges, grapefruit, lemons, limes)
- fruit juice

**How else can I help with reflux?**

**Make sure your child or youth:**

- eats more slowly and eats just until full – reflux happens more often when the stomach is too full
- is physically active for at least an hour each day
- maintains a healthy weight – extra weight around the middle can make reflux worse
- wears comfortable clothes
- waits 2-3 hours after a meal before lying down or going to bed
- stays (or becomes) smoke free – smoking is very irritating to the esophagus
- elevates the head of the bed with blocks up to six inches high (for school aged children and youth who sleep in regular beds) so gravity helps to prevent reflux



- avoids chewing gum or sucking on hard candy
- limits the amount of cola, caffeine, tea or alcohol they drink
- avoids eating large meals before strenuous physical activity

**Do not:**

- use pillows or elevate cribs, unless your health-care provider tells you to
- use infant car seats for naps or feeding. They increase pressure in the belly (abdomen) can make reflux worse

## Have you registered for MyChart?

MyChart is a **FREE** secure, online patient portal that connects patients to parts of their CHEO electronic health record, anywhere, at any time.

To apply for MyChart access, visit [cheo.on.ca/mychart](http://cheo.on.ca/mychart) and fill out the MyChart access request form. Once your application has been approved, we'll send you an email with an activation code and instructions on how



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