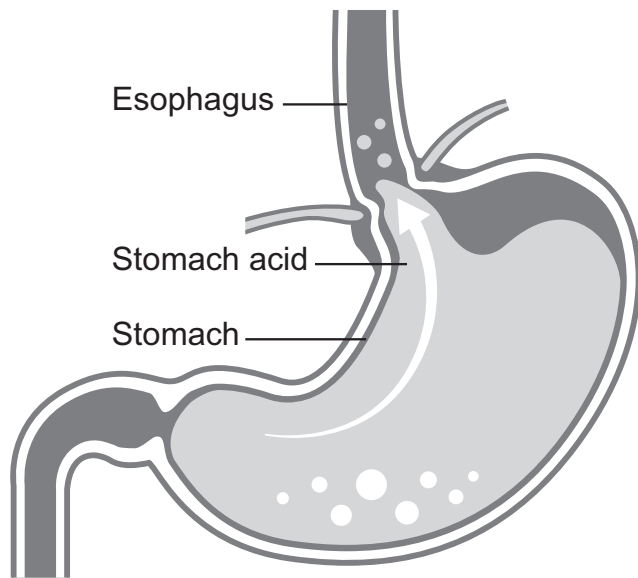


In some people, stomach acid may leak from the stomach into the throat and esophagus, the tube that leads from the mouth to the stomach. This is called acid reflux. It can cause pain and muscle spasms in the throat. It can also damage your esophagus.



*Figure 1. Acid reflux.*

## Signs of Acid Reflux

You may have a combination of these signs:

- Burning feeling in your chest that may spread to your throat
- Sour taste in your mouth
- Difficulty swallowing
- Dry cough, hoarseness, or sore throat
- Bringing up food or sour liquid, especially when you are lying down
- Feeling of a lump in your throat

## Tips for Managing Acid Reflux

Changing what you eat and when you eat can help ease acid reflux.

- Eat meals throughout the day. Do not skip breakfast or lunch. Avoid heavy meals in the evening.
- Avoid spicy foods.

- Stay away from foods that are very cold or very hot in temperature.
- Be sure to chew your food well before swallowing.
- Stop eating and drinking 2–4 hours before bedtime.
- Avoid foods that can make stomach acid worse:
  - Alcohol
  - Chocolate
  - Citrus juices
  - Coffee and tea
  - Fatty foods
  - Fried foods
  - Milk, 2% or whole
  - Nuts
  - Strong flavored candy, mints, gum, and breath freshener

Here some other changes that may help.

- After you eat, wait 2 hours before you lie down.
- Sleep with your head 4–8 inches higher than your heart.
- Wear clothes that fit loosely around your chest and belly.
- Limit the amount of stooping and bending over you do, especially when your stomach is full.
- Try doing “belly breathing” when you have signs of reflux. Push your belly outward gently while you inhale, and pull it inward while you exhale.
- Take time each day for activities that lower your stress levels. This could include walking, meditation, or hobbies you enjoy.

## Talk with Your Cancer Care Team

Before you take any over-the-counter medicine for acid reflux or heartburn, talk with your cancer care team.

If acid reflux happens more than two times a week or interferes with your daily life, talk with your cancer care team about medicines that can help.

Being overweight can make acid reflux worse. Talk to your cancer care team before you start any weight loss program.