



LARYNGITIS AND SORE THROAT FROM ACID REFLUX PATIENT INFORMATION

It has been estimated that as many as 30% of people have a hiatal hernia or malfunctioning Lower Esophageal Spincter (LES). The LES is the muscular “valve” that is suppose to keep highly acidic stomach contents from going backwards into the esophagus. Persons with one of these conditions may note frequent heartburn or acid belching. However, not everyone has these obvious symptoms.

When a person with acid reflux lies down at night, acid may travel up to the level of the throat and even come into contact with parts of the larynx (such as the arytenoid area). Because this occurs mainly at night during sleep, the person is often unaware that this is happening. One or more of the following symptoms may result:

- Chronic sore throat – usually worse in the morning and gets better as the day wears on
- Excessive morning “phlegm”
- Chronic, irritative cough
- A sensation of needing to continually clear one’s throat
- A particularly low or husky morning voice requiring prolonged “warm up” if one is a singer

TREATMENT MEASURE

Avoid caffeine, alcohol, spicy foods, coffee (no Decaf), tea (no Decaf), pop (carbonated), tomatoes (ie: pizza, spaghetti sauce, Catsup), vinegar, (ie: mustard, pickles, salad dressings), chocolate, onion, garlic, green tea, black tea and all citrus (ie: fresh fruit or juice). These substances may increase stomach acidity and may also make the LES function poorly. (You may have apples, grapes, bananas, pears, melons and herbal tea).

Eat the last meal/snack of the day no fewer than THREE hours before going to sleep. In addition, try to eat the heavier meal of the day at noon and lighter one in the evening. The purpose of these suggestions is to have the stomach relatively empty when one lies down so that there is not a lot of “back pressure” to push the stomach contents up the esophagus and into the throat.

Use six inch bed blocks under the head posts of the bed. Old books or wooden blocks work well for this purpose. This procedure puts the entire bed on a slight downward slant from head to foot. Gravity now assists in keeping stomach acid where it belongs.

Use a bedtime dose of simple (Liquid) antacid such as Mylanta or Maalox in order to reduce stomach acidity. Take 2 Tablespoons at bedtime.

It is recommended that a trial of the above measures be continued for a minimum of three months and that none of the treatments outlined be omitted.

If you have further questions, do not hesitate to call your physician at 708-216-9183. At night or on the weekends, call 708-216-8000, the Loyola University Physicians’ Answering Service.