

Reflux and Diet

Gastroesophageal reflux disease, more commonly known as reflux, is the backward and abnormal flow of the stomach contents into the oesophagus.

Symptoms include a burning sensation in the chest or abdominal pain, sour taste, regurgitation of food or liquid, and chronic cough.

Reflux is experienced by ~20-85% of the CF population, greater than those individuals without CF. Untreated, reflux can also cause pain or difficulty swallowing, damage to the oesophagus and oesophageal narrowing.

You may find certain foods trigger your symptoms. Discovering which foods make your symptoms worse can help you manage your reflux. Triggers are different for everyone.

Common Causes

Common foods which may aggravate reflux symptoms in those with CF and the general population include:

- Spicy or fatty foods
- caffeine
- chocolate
- citrus
- carbonated beverages
- peppermint/chewing gum
- fermented drinks and alcohol

In order to figure out your triggers, it may be helpful to keep a food and symptom diary for a period of time.

General dietary and lifestyle recommendations for the general population may also be helpful in managing reflux.



Tips include:

- Small, frequent meals
- Physiotherapy prior to meals + large snacks
- Avoid lying down post meal/snack for ~30-60 minutes
- Avoid high fat meals 2-3 hours before going to sleep
- If overweight- aim for gradual weight loss

Avoiding alcohol, carbonated drinks and spicy foods before airway clearance may be useful in avoiding episodes during airway clearance.

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