



Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust

Reflux dietary advice

Information for patients

Name _____

Your dietitian _____

Dietitian contact number: 0118 322 7116

This leaflet gives dietary and lifestyle advice on managing the symptoms of reflux.

Ask your dietitian for advice.

What is reflux?

Reflux is when the acid from your stomach travels back up in the wrong direction into your throat (oesophagus) and the most common symptom of this is a burning sensation (also called heartburn).

There are some foods and lifestyle factors that can trigger reflux or make its symptoms worse.

There are also medications that can help ease your reflux, these are often called antacids and help to neutralise the acid in your stomach.

It is important to visit your GP to discuss how to best manage your symptoms.

Lifestyle advice

Measures that are generally accepted as being helpful to people with reflux are:

- Sleeping in a semi-upright position or with the head of the bed raised 7-8 inches (20cm) to help prevent night time symptoms of reflux.
- Sleep on your left side.
- Avoid wearing tight clothing around your waist as this puts pressure on your stomach.
- Stopping smoking.
- Keep physically active.

Dietary advice

- Aim for a healthy body weight or reduce weight if you are overweight or obese. Weight around your waist area is a risk factor for reflux. Calculating your Body Mass Index (BMI) can be a useful way to monitor this. Visit www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-weight/ for help with calculating your BMI.

- Eat smaller meals at regular intervals, avoid large meals.
- Chew food properly and relax at meal-times.
- Avoid eating late at night.
- Avoid bending, lifting or lying down after meals.
- Avoid excessive consumption of tea and coffee.
- Avoid common irritant foods/drinks such as:
 - Spicy foods including onion, chilli, black pepper and garlic.
 - Acidic foods (e.g. citrus fruits, tomatoes, vinegar, salad dressings).
 - Tomato products e.g. juice, pasta sauces.
 - Peppermint.
 - Chocolate.
 - Fizzy drinks.
- Drink alcohol in moderation, not exceeding the recommendation for men and women of 14 units per week.

Often, fats and high fat foods or meals can worsen symptoms of reflux. Follow these simple guidelines to try and reduce your fat intake:

- Limit oils / fats used in cooking and at the table e.g. margarine, salad dressings.
- Choose low fat dairy foods.
- Trim visible fat / skin from meats and choose lean versions.
- Limit your intake of processed foods such as pastries, cookies, cakes, chocolate.
- Limit your intake of deep fried foods.

If the above diet and lifestyle advice does not help to settle your symptoms, or you are experiencing other symptoms such as vomiting, fatigue and unplanned weight loss, it is important to visit your GP for further advice.

Further advice

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heartburn-and-acid-reflux/>

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust Dietitians, March 2026.
Next review due: March 2028.