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Belching

Belching is the act of bringing up air from the stomach.

Considerations

Belching is a normal process. The purpose of belching is to release air from the stomach. Every time you swallow, you also swallow air, along with fluid or food.

The buildup of air in the upper stomach causes the stomach to stretch. This triggers the muscle at the lower end of the esophagus (the tube that runs from your mouth to the stomach) to relax. Air is allowed to escape up the esophagus and out the mouth.

Depending on the cause of the belching, it may occur more often, last longer, be more forceful.

Symptoms such as nausea, dyspepsia, and heartburn may be relieved by belching.

Causes

Abnormal belching may be due to:

- Acid reflux disease (also called gastroesophageal reflux disease or GERD)
- Digestive system disease
- Pressure caused by the unconscious swallowing of air (aerophagia)

Home Care

You can get relief by lying on your side or in a knee-to-chest position until the gas passes.

Avoid chewing gum, eating quickly, and eating gas-producing foods and beverages.

When to Contact a Medical Professional

Most of the time belching is a minor problem. Contact a health care provider if the belching does not go away, or if you also have other symptoms such as abdominal pain or fever.

What to Expect at Your Office Visit

Your provider will examine you and ask about your medical history and symptoms, including:

- Is this the first time this has occurred?
- Is there a pattern to your belching? For example, does it happen when you are nervous or after you have been consuming certain foods or drinks?
- What other symptoms do you have?

You may need more tests based on what the provider finds during your exam and your other symptoms.

Alternative Names

Burping; Eruption; Gas - belching

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