

Acid Reflux Disease Symptoms: Knowing your Body

Acid reflux disease is a condition in which the stomach acids abnormally reflux into the esophagus. This phenomenon is irregularly experienced by most people, most especially after eating.

Our body uses gastric and stomach acids to break down the food that we eat. Normally, after the digestion in the stomach, the food is delivered by the digestive muscles to the intestines for extra digestion. But in patients who have acid reflux disease, the acidic stomach contents are moved back to the esophagus, which then causes inflammation. Cigarettes, alcohol, caffeine, pregnancy, and fatty foods are some factors which worsens acid reflux conditions.

Our present knowledge about acid reflux based on medical researches tells us that this disease is common in men as it is in women. There is no sexual preference. Moreover, the prevalence of acid reflux is more frequent in people of 40 years of age or more.

Symptoms of acid reflux may be typical or atypical. But based on the diagnosis of acid reflux patients, only 70% of those who have this disease manifest typical symptoms.

Typical or esophageal symptoms concern indicators which are related with the esophagus. Such symptoms include the following:

Heartburn. This is a condition in which the patient feels a painful burning feeling in the esophagus. The pain often develops in the chest and may swell to the neck or throat. This is most probable to occur in relation with these activities: after a heavy meal, lifting, bending over, and lying down. Based on one study, about 75% of acid reflux patients experience this symptom at night. These night-time patients also tend to experience more harsh pain than those whose symptom occurs at other times.

Dyspepsia. Researches show that about half of acid reflux patients have dyspepsia. This is a syndrome which consists of pain and distress in the upper abdomen, nausea after a meal, and stomach fullness. It is not a rule however, that those who have dyspepsia have acid reflux.

Regurgitation. This is when the gastric contents back up into the pharynx and sometimes as far as the mouth. In cases where the acids have spilled into the tracheobronchial tree, respiratory complications can be stimulated.

There are many instances, though, that acid reflux patients do not manifest symptoms such as regurgitation and heartburn. Instead, they experience atypical or extraesophageal symptoms which include the following:

Throat Symptoms. Although it does not commonly happen, acid reflux patients suffer from symptoms that occur in the throat. Hoarseness, the feeling of having a lump in the throat, dry cough are undergone by those who have acid laryngitis, a throat symptom. Patients can also have difficulty in swallowing, a condition known as dysphagia. In critical cases, the food may get trapped in the throat or even choke, which can result to a severe chest pain. Other throat symptoms are chronic sore throat and persistent hiccups.

Vomiting and Nausea. When a patient suffers from nausea which persists for weeks, he may have acid reflux. There are few instances where vomiting can occur as often as once a day.

Respiratory Symptoms. Coughing and wheezing are counted as respiratory symptoms. These result from the overrunning of the stomach acids into the tracheobronchial tree creating bronchoconstriction.

Acid reflux disease can last for several months if not given proper medical attention. Drug treatment may only be required for a short time. But when the symptoms tend to repetitively occur, the drug treatment may have to be reapplied.