

## Pillows and Positional Therapy as Immediate Remedy for Acid Reflux

When we eat, the contents in the stomach normally proceed into the intestines with the aid of digestive muscle contractions. However, for those who have acid reflux disease, the digestive contents travel back into the esophagus. And since the digestive materials contain acids, a patient suffers from inflammation in the throat which may be associated with pains in the abdomen and breastbone. Other symptoms include dyspepsia, vomiting, regurgitation, and respiratory-related indicators.

Acid reflux is a chronic health condition. Once it has started to transmit in the body, it will continue to inhabit indefinitely. Although treatments are available, symptoms usually tend to be applied repeatedly. And this means that treatments also need to be employed recurrently.

The act of stomach liquids backing up into the esophagus is actually normal. It also happens to those without acid reflux disease. In the case of acid reflux patients, however, the stomach contents have more acid than the normal and that the acid tends to stay in the esophagus in a longer period of time.

The human body, of course, has its own mechanisms to lessen the harmful effects brought about by the refluxed acids. An example of such is the salivary glands found in the mouth. These glands produce saliva, a liquid which contains bicarbonate. When we swallow, the saliva containing bicarbonates passes through the esophagus.

Bicarbonates have the ability to neutralize acids, which may have remained after an earlier regurgitation. Also, studies have shown that most cases of reflux happen during daytime. At this time, individuals are usually on an upright position. With the aid of gravity, reflux is minimized because the stomach contents are held back down. Moreover, when awake, individuals recurrently swallow. And this practice maximizes the benefits that saliva does in reducing the level of acids in the throat.

The mentioned natural ways of the body to protect itself are important in the maintenance of the esophagus. But saliva, swallowing, and gravity can only work when a person is in an upright position. During night time, when individuals are asleep, gravity cannot help much. Also, the saliva secretion is trimmed down and swallowing does not take place. It is for these reasons why acid reflux which comes about at night becomes more severe sore in the esophagus because the acids stay longer and therefore do more damage to it.

Acid reflux can be more susceptible to the pregnant and obese. The increased

levels of hormones during pregnancy and high levels of fats in the body can induce acid reflux because of the pressure in the lower esophageal sphincter, a muscle that prevents the stomach contents from moving back to the esophagus, is reduced. As such, it will be easier for the partially digested contents to come back because less force is holding them back down. In addition, for the pregnant women, the pressure in the abdomen rises due to the developing fetus in the womb.

There are ways to help the body minimize the occurrences of reflux. One of the easiest to implement is positional therapy. This is done by elevating the head and the torso when in a sleeping position. Pillows, which are readily available, can be positioned to raise the torso at about six to eight inches. This position can provide maximum effectiveness in holding back reflux. Surveys have shown that the use of increased recommended elevation results to greater efficiency.