GASTROESOPHAGEAL REFLUX DISEASE (GERD) is an aggravating condition that affects many immune globulin (IG) patients. It is a more severe form of acid reflux that plagues heartburn sufferers at least twice a week with symptoms that range from the feeling of a lump in the throat and a dry cough, to chest pain and difficulty swallowing.

Experts in the fields of immunology, nutrition and alternative medicine have several suggestions on how those with GERD can successfully manage their symptoms.

**Lifestyle Changes**

One of the best ways patients can help manage their GERD symptoms is to examine their lifestyle, specifically their exercise habits and diet.

Krista Sheehan, author of the article What Are Good Exercises To Do When You Have Acid Reflux?, suggests three forms of exercise for those with GERD: cycling, Pilates and walking. Cycling is an energetic workout choice that allows riders to stay in an upright position. However, it is recommended that cyclists not hunch forward on the bike, as this would put pressure on their stomachs and force acid into the esophagus. Pilates exercises utilize many GERD-friendly positions such as cat, side leg kicks, plank and saw poses, which are gentle stretches and slow movements that are relaxing and will not aggravate the esophagus. And, gravity involved in moderate, low-intensity walking helps with digestion.

Diet can have a profound effect on those with GERD. Common trigger foods to avoid are tomato-based sauces, fried foods, citrus fruits, chocolate, peppermint gum and carbonated beverages. Items on the “good” list include lean chicken and pork, ginger, oatmeal, low-fat milk, yogurt, ice cream, cinnamon gum and eggs. Symptoms can also be controlled by eating several small meals throughout the day instead of fewer large meals.¹

In addition to steering clear of trigger foods, GERD sufferers can turn to cookbooks that specialize in heartburn-conscious meals. Oftentimes, these books highlight informational sections that list best and worst foods for heartburn, medical guides and natural healing programs.

**Friendly Bacteria**

Probiotics are friendly bacteria responsible for maintaining a healthy digestive tract, which is especially important for IG patients since they are frequent users of antibiotics. Probiotics are known to restore the balance of the intestinal microflora that can become unbalanced due to illness, stress, age, traveling or the use of medication. A number of probiotic strains are currently available, but the two most common are Lactobacillus plantarum and Bifidobacterium bifidum. These are offered in an assortment of products from supplement capsules and granola bars, to yogurt and breakfast cereal. It is important that patients discuss the use of probiotics with their physician to make sure this is the best course for them.²

**Over-the-Counter and Prescription Solutions**

Over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription treatments also may help to control GERD symptoms. There are three different types of drugs: antacids, histamine (H2) receptor blockers and proton pump inhibitors (PPI).

Antacids help by neutralizing stomach acid. Yet, while these will help to counteract the acid, they will not repair an inflamed esophagus damaged by stomach acid. H2 receptor blockers work by reducing acid production. And, although they do not function as quickly as antacids, they provide longer relief from symptoms. Stronger H2 blockers can be obtained with a doctor’s prescription if the OTC version is unsuccessful in providing relief. PPIs block acid production in the stomach and give the esophagus tissue time to heal from excessive acid exposure. Again, if the OTC versions of these treatments do not provide relief, they are also available through a doctor’s prescription.³

**Controlling GERD Is Possible**

It is possible for IG patients to successfully manage GERD symptoms. By making adjustments in nutrition, altering exercise routines and adding supplements, the burden of severe acid reflux can be offset.

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**References**


Nature’s Bounty Advanced Probiotic 10
Nature’s Bounty Advanced Probiotic 10 is a pre- and probiotic blend that contains 10 distinct naturally derived probiotic strains and 20 billion live probiotic cultures per serving. A daily dose of two capsules can help to provide support for digestive and intestinal health and overall improved immune function.

(800) 433-2990, www.naturesbounty.com/product/031644

Attune Probiotic Bars
Attune Probiotic Bars deliver 6.1 billion CFUs of clinically supported strains of probiotics in natural and certified gluten-free chocolate bars. Each bar weighs 0.7 ounces and is offered in dark chocolate, chocolate crisp, and mint chocolate flavors. They are available in the following quantities: individually, seven pack or 28 pack.
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Dropping Acid: The Reflux Diet Cookbook & Cure
Dropping Acid: The Reflux Diet Cookbook & Cure is a nontraditional diet approach to help treat the symptoms of acid reflux. The 200-page hardcover cookbook is written by otolaryngologists Jamie Koufman, MD, and Jordan Stern, MD, and French Master Chef Marc Bauer. It features a collection of 75 delicious, healthful recipes using only good-for-reflux foods, and also includes a section of best and worst foods for reflux sufferers.
(212) 463-8014, www.refluxcookbook.com

The Acid Reflux Solution: A Cookbook and Lifestyle Guide for Healing Heartburn Naturally
www.amazon.com/books/dp/1607742276

Nexium
Nexium is a proton pump inhibitor (PPI) that is prescribed to treat the symptoms of acid reflux disease and to help heal esophageal damage. With one pill a day, it can repair most erosive esophagitis in four to eight weeks; however, results may vary.

Pepto-Bismol Max Strength Liquid
Pepto-Bismol Max Strength Liquid is an antacid that helps relieve the symptoms of heartburn, indigestion, nausea, upset stomach and diarrhea. It is designed to treat individuals 12 years of age and older, is available in 4-, 8- and 12-ounce bottles, and comes in a fresh wintergreen flavor. Each 30-milliliter dose contains 1,050 milligrams of bismuth subsalicylate.
www.pepto-bismol.com/products/liquid/pepto-extra
What Is GERD? Common Symptoms of GERD. GERD vs. Acid Reflux. Causes of GERD & Risk Factors. The Trouble With Conventional Treatments For GERD. Natural Treatment of GERD Symptoms. Precautions When Treating GERD. Final Thoughts On Treating GERD Symptoms. Between 20-44 percent of the total population of those living in Western, industrialized nations suffers from GERD. Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) occurs when stomach acid frequently flows back into the tube connecting your mouth and stomach (esophagus). This backwash (acid reflux) can irritate the lining of your esophagus. Many people experience acid reflux from time to time. GERD is mild acid reflux that occurs at least twice a week, or moderate to severe acid reflux that occurs at least once a week. Most people can manage the discomfort of GERD with lifestyle changes and over-the-counter medications. Frequent heartburn is a common symptom of GERD. Find out about other symptoms and tests to get a proper diagnosis. Your doctor will usually base a diagnosis of gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) on whether you have symptoms of the condition and how frequent and severe they are. You may also undergo a test to see how much acid is in your esophagus. Common symptoms of gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) include heartburn, dry cough, sore throat, bad breath, chest or abdominal pain, and nausea. Heartburn and acid regurgitation are the main symptoms of gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), though some people have GERD without heartburn. Other symptoms include pain in your chest and/or abdomen, difficulty swallowing, dry cough, hoarseness, nausea, vomiting, bad breath, wheezing, and interrupted sleep. © Verywell, 2018. Frequent Symptoms. Gastro-oesophageal reflux disease (GORD or GERD) is a common and chronic gastrointestinal disorder. Nearly 80% of the population will experience symptoms of reflux at some stage in their lives. Introduction to managing the symptoms of GORD. Gastro-oesophageal reflux disease (GORD or GERD) is a common and chronic gastrointestinal disorder. Nearly 80% of the population will experience symptoms of reflux at some stage in their lives.