

The Long Term Risks Of Heartburn

Contributed by Webmaster
Tuesday, 12 February 2008
Last Updated Tuesday, 12 February 2008

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Do you suffer from heartburn? Besides the obvious discomfort, heartburn can lead to more serious health risks. Long term damage of acid reflux or heartburn can lead to a condition known as Barrett's esophagus.

Barrett's esophagus is a digestive disorder in which the normal healthy white lining of the tube that carries food from the throat to the stomach, known as the esophagus, is damaged and replaced by an abnormal red lining called specialized intestinal metaplasia. This happens because of stomach acid that leaks back into and irritates the esophagus. This acid damage is also referred to as heartburn, GERD, and acid reflux. Acid reflux is a result of stomach acids used to digest foods coming back into the lower esophagus area. This occurs when the lower esophageal sphincter muscle gets weakened or functions improperly. The burning sensation is due to the fact that the esophageal lining is unable to withstand the rising acidic levels.

Barrett's is an uncommon health condition, only about 5 percent of people with GERD develop Barrett's esophagus. However, if Barrett's is diagnosed, there is a 30- to 125-fold increased risk of developing esophageal cancer. The cancer can spread to lymph nodes and other organs. Esophageal cancer arising from Barrett's esophagus can lead to the second fastest growing type of cancer in the United States. The scary thing is that Barrett's esophagus itself does not cause symptoms. The heartburn or acid reflux that causes Barrett's esophagus results in symptoms of chest pain or indigestion.

One of the most important things you can do to prevent your Barrett's esophagus from turning into cancer is to manage your heartburn. The allopathic treatment for heartburn usually involves taking antacids. Antacids are usually taken 30-60 minutes after eating. Prescription drugs have also been shown to control acid reflux. If you suffer from this condition, be sure to ask your physician what your best options would be for treating problem. Many also choose to seek natural cures for treating acid reflux. Some popular treatments include digestive enzymes at the beginning of meals, chewable calcium tablets, and herbal combinations including marshmallow root, DGL, and aloe vera.

Be sure to call your health care provider if heartburn persists for longer than a few days, or you have pain or difficulty swallowing. Also, call your provider if symptoms worsen, do not improve with treatment, or if new symptoms develop in a person with Barrett's esophagus. Diagnosis and treatment of acid reflux may prevent the onset of Barrett's esophagus.

The author of this article recommends visiting [Herbal Remedy For Heartburn](#) for more information on heartburn and Barrett's esophagus.

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