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Conservative Treatment Measures For Gastroesophageal Acid Reflux

1. Discontinue (preferably) or minimize your tobacco use.
2. Your evening meal should be as early as possible, or 4-6 hours before bedtime. Consider having your largest meal at lunch and a lighter meal at dinner. Avoid snacking before bedtime. If you do have a snack, be particularly careful to avoid foods that trigger reflux (see below).
3. Elevate the head of the bed or purchase a foam wedge to place under your head and also torso at an incline. Using several pillows only elevates your head, neck and perhaps your shoulder. This may cause neck problems and causes a bend to occur in the upper abdomen which increases the pressure on your stomach and may aggravate the reflux. Elevation of the head of the bed should be accomplished gradually until 4-6 inches is reached. Increasing the elevation by 1-2 inches at a time will allow your body to adapt (and prevent the sensation of sliding). This can be done with a piece of wood, bricks, cinder blocks or pails filled with sand. An "egg crate" top layer may make this more comfortable. An inflatable wedge is also available that can be placed under the mattress.
4. Avoid beverages that contain alcohol, carbonation and particularly, caffeine. Abstaining from all caffeine is preferable.
5. Avoid spicy foods, citrus juices (orange and grapefruit) and foods prepared with tomato sauce. Also avoid chocolate, mint and peppermint. Avoid fatty foods and onions.
6. Try eating small (more frequent) meals. Avoid overeating.
7. Work on your stress if this seems to be a trigger.
8. Lose weight if you are overweight. You may see a benefit from even modest weight reduction.
9. You may take antacids for milder "breakthrough" episodes if you are on a prescription medication.