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Did You Know?

GERD is the most common gastrointestinal related diagnosis made by physicians during clinical visits in the U.S.*

It is estimated that pain and discomfort from acid reflux impact over **80 million people** at least once per month in the U.S.*

GERD can have a **significant impact on a patient's quality of life** through persistent typical and atypical symptoms, inconsistent sleep patterns, dietary restrictions, additional health care costs and lost productivity from work.*

*References:

<http://www.gerdhelp.com/gerd-references/>

GERD Awareness Week 2021



The week of November 21-28, 2021, is National Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD) Awareness Week.

It comes just in time for Thanksgiving when many Americans may experience heartburn associated with overeating. However, if heartburn occurs more frequently, or is associated with additional symptoms, it may be gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD).

An estimated 1 in every 5 American adults suffers from GERD. It is a chronic condition caused by changes in the gastroesophageal valve (GEV) that allow contents to flow from the stomach back into the esophagus. Left untreated, GERD can be a lifelong disease. It can lead to bothersome symptoms, which can vary from mild or moderate to severe depending on the person.

- **Typical symptoms:** burning sensation in the chest (heartburn), regurgitation of food or sour liquid (acid reflux) and difficulty swallowing (dysphagia)
- **Atypical symptoms:** sensation of a lump in the throat (globus), asthma, chronic dry cough, chronic sore throat, laryngitis and hoarseness, dental erosions and non-cardiac chest pain, chronic throat-clearing, bloating, and more

GERD is not an “acid” problem. Instead it is caused by an *anatomical issue*. The acid our stomach produces is important for digestion, killing harmful bacteria and helping with the absorption of electrolytes and other nutrients from the foods we consume.

GERD occurs when the valve between the stomach and the esophagus is not working properly and fails to keep contents in the stomach. Medications may offer mild to intermittent symptom control, but they do not stop or prevent reflux. Additionally, those who are or may become dependent on daily medication may develop severe complications from GERD, even if no symptoms are experienced.

When left untreated, GERD can lead to other health complications including:

- Damage to the Throat or Esophagus
- Inflammation or Narrowing of the Esophagus
- Respiratory Complications
- Barrett's Esophagus
- Esophageal Cancer

Minimally Invasive Treatments

If lifestyle modifications are not effective in reducing your GERD symptoms, **it is important for GERD sufferers to know that there are endoscopic and minimally invasive procedures**, like the TIF procedure for reflux, that can help restore proper function to the faulty valve and relieve your GERD.

If you have or suspect you have GERD, please contact your doctor or Fox Valley Surgical to schedule an evaluation and discuss the issue.