

## The Link Between Acid Reflux and Smoking

If you smoke, or use any form of tobacco, improving your posture while you eat isn't going to do much for your condition. Why? Smoking/nicotine is a direct contributing factor to acid reflux and to chronic heartburn caused by gastroesophageal reflux disorder (GERD). Therefore, engaging in any tobacco use – cigarettes, cigars, pipes, snuff and chewing tobacco – can not only become a literal pain in the chest, for GERD sufferers it can even disrupt sleep and interfere with your lifestyle. The following are six ways in which smoking directly affects acid reflux:

1. Decrease in saliva production - Cigarette smoking inhibits saliva production, and eats up most of the bicarbonates within the saliva produce. Bicarbonates help neutralize stomach acid, and saliva works to coat the oesophagus to lessen the effects of acid that refluxes up from the stomach. Saliva also helps to wash acid in the oesophagus back to the stomach.
2. Increase in acidity – Nicotine encourages the production of stomach acid.
3. Bile salt movement – Smoking appears to encourage the movement of bile salts to the stomach from the intestines. Stomach acids are even more harmful when bile salts are present.
4. Direct injury to the oesophagus – Smoking can cause direct harm to the oesophagus by making it vulnerable to acid reflux injury.
5. Impair LES functioning – Nicotine can lower the pressure in the lower esophageal (LES) which can cause it to become weak and relaxed. LES is the valve that resides between the oesophagus and the stomach. The decrease in pressure can cause the LES to relax inappropriately, allowing stomach acids and enzymes to be thrust back into the oesophagus.
6. Decreased gastric motility – It has been discovered in studies that people who smoke have reduced gastric motility while they are smoking. A decrease in gastric movement can lead to poor digestion due to the fact that it takes a longer for the stomach to empty.

As you can see, there are plenty of reasons why smoking can cause and make acid reflux worse. That being said, it shouldn't come as a surprise to you that the best treatment a tobacco user can do to help their condition is quit. Of course, quitting smoking isn't as easy as we think or would like it to be. An addiction to nicotine is a hard habit to kick, especially if you've been smoking for many years, hang around others who smoke, and enjoy it. However, smoking, like any addiction, can be overcome. The only trick is, in order to quit smoking, you have to want to. There are many different quitting strategies you can consider. Therefore, if you find quitting through your own methods is difficult, consult your doctor for other options. Also, many people who want to quit smoking find support groups to be very helpful. Does quitting smoking really help your heartburn? It is believed by many medical practitioners that for most acid reflux sufferers, quitting smoking will likely allow them to get better fast. However, some practitioners believe that quitting smoking will only provide modest relief. Nevertheless, all medical practitioners agree that quitting smoking is a good idea regardless if it helps your acid reflux or not. After all, even if you see little change in your experiences with heartburn, quitting smoking greatly reduces your chances of developing serious diseases such as cancer, heart and lung disease. In addition, don't forget that smoking isn't the only cause of acid reflux. Thus, if you are not seeing improvement after quitting, it's time for you to take a careful look at your diet.

## About the Author

This group will be an exchange of ideas to further the knowledge of the important aspect of Human Digestion and its effects on many chronic.

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