

## **GASTROESOPHAGEAL REFLUX "GERD"**

**GASTROESOPHAGEAL REFLUX:** Gastroesophageal reflux is when the stomach acids will wash up into the esophagus, and in the ENT profession, is manifested by an irritation in the larynx. This may present as a foreign body sensation in the throat, and this may present as a chronic dry-type cough, or may be totally asymptomatic and be noted as an ulcer in the larynx when the physician examines. Known irritants that exacerbate this condition are: 1) alcoholic beverages; 2) caffeine; 3) chocolate; 4) spicy foods.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** 1) Elevate the head of the bed so that it is slanted thirty degrees. This can easily be done by placing 2 x 4 blocks -or a couple of books -under the legs of the headboard. Lying on a pillow will flex the neck, but this will not be helpful. The stomach needs to be lower than the throat. 2) Limiting the intake of liquids prior to retiring will limit the chance of the acid being washed back up into the esophagus and burning the throat. Two to three hours before going to bed, please limit the amount of fluids that you drink. Taking Tums or antacids before going to bed will be helpful. If the ulceration does not heal, then a trip to the Operating Room for a biopsy of this is indicated to rule out other causes of the ulceration. 3) If this continues to be a problem, and the prophylactic measures mentioned above are not helpful, then it may be necessary to seek a gastroenterologist and have some specific studies to assure that this is the diagnosis, and other medications may be required. 4) It is interesting to note that a large number of people with this problem are completely asymptomatic other than a foreign body sensation in the throat, or a tickle or a cough. The typical heartburn is not noted as would be expected.