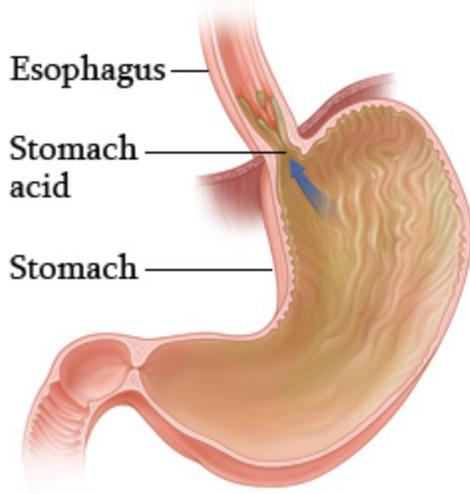


Barrett's Esophagus: After Your Visit

Your Care Instructions



The esophagus is the tube that connects the throat to the stomach. Food and liquids go through this tube.

In Barrett's esophagus, the cells that line the tube change. This is usually because of gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD). GERD causes acid from your stomach to back up into the esophagus.

When you have Barrett's esophagus, you are slightly more likely to get cancer of the esophagus. So regular testing is important to watch for signs of this cancer.

You can treat GERD to control your symptoms and feel better.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Take your medicines exactly as prescribed. Call your doctor if you think you are having a problem with your medicine.
- If you take over-the-counter medicine, such as antacids or acid reducers, follow all instructions on the label. If you use these medicines often, talk with your doctor.
- Do not smoke or chew tobacco. Smoking can make GERD worse. If you need help quitting, talk to your doctor about stop-smoking programs and medicines. These can increase your chances of quitting for good.
- Chocolate, mint, and alcohol can make GERD worse. They relax the valve between the esophagus and the stomach.
- Spicy foods, foods that have a lot of acid (like tomatoes and oranges), and coffee can make GERD symptoms worse in some people. If your symptoms are worse after you eat a certain food, you may want to stop eating that food to see if your symptoms get better.
- Eat smaller meals, and more often. After eating, wait 2 to 3 hours before you lie down.
- Raise the head of your bed 6 to 8 inches by putting blocks under the frame or a foam wedge under the head of the mattress.
- Do not wear tight clothing around your midsection.
- If you are overweight, lose weight. Even losing 5 to 10 pounds can help.

When should you call for help?

Call 911 if you have symptoms of a heart attack. These may include:

- Chest pain or pressure.
- Sweating.
- Shortness of breath.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Pain, pressure, or a strange feeling in the back, neck, jaw, or upper belly or in one or both shoulders or arms.
- Lightheadedness or sudden weakness.
- A fast or irregular heartbeat.

After you call 911, the operator may tell you to chew 1 adult-strength or 2 to 4 low-dose aspirin. Wait for an ambulance. Do not try to drive yourself.

Call your doctor now or seek immediate medical care if:

- You have new or different belly pain.
- Your stools are black and look like tar, or they have streaks of blood.

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- Your symptoms get worse or are not improving as expected.
- You have any pain or difficulty swallowing.
- Food seems to catch in your throat or chest.

Where can you learn more?

Go to www.southdenvergi.com, log into the web portal, and enter L146 in the search box to learn more about Barrett's Esophagus: After Your Visit.

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