Simply making minor lifestyle and dietary changes can greatly reduce the symptoms of GERD.

**Weight loss**

Being overweight has clearly been shown to be associated with GERD, and those with a lower Body Mass Index (BMI) have less risk of symptoms. There is now research that shows losing weight can help reduce the symptoms of acid reflux.

**Diet**

Diet appears to be a major part of controlling GERD symptoms. Most people with GERD know of foods that can provoke their reflux. The most common foods that people complain of include:

- Onions
- Tomatoes and tomato products
- Vinegars or foods cured in vinegar (pickles, relish)
- Spicy foods
- Acidic fruits and juices (orange, grapefruit, pineapple and lemon)
- Foods very high in sugar
- Whole milk products
- Fatty or greasy meats
- Fried or greasy foods
- Recipes that are very high in fat
- Alcohol
- Coffee
- Tea
- Carbonated beverages
- Peppermint
- Chocolate

**Alcohol use**

Alcohol can slow the stomach from emptying properly. Minimizing alcohol intake can help reduce reflux symptoms.

**Avoid eating before going to bed**

Eating before going to bed can aggravate reflux symptoms. To avoid reflux episodes don’t eat or drink anything for at least 3 hours before going to sleep.

If you have to lie down after eating, elevating your head and upper torso can help to prevent GERD symptoms at night. Place bricks or a cinder block under the feet at the head of your bed. Using a foam wedge to elevate your head and shoulders can work also.
Activity

Some exercises can increase pressure in the abdomen and aggravate reflux symptoms.

People with acid reflux should be careful when:

- Bending or stooping
- Lifting heavy objects (weight lifting)
- Sit-ups
- Isometric type exercises
- Running or jogging

Research has shown that riding a stationary bike has been shown to be a good exercise for those with GERD.

www.drgourmet.com/gerd has more information as well as many reflux-friendly recipes.