

Laryngopharyngeal Reflux is a condition of abnormal exposure of the voice box and throat to acid from the stomach. Common symptoms are hoarseness, unexplained cough, chronic sore throat, difficulty swallowing, throat-clearing, and the perception that something is caught in your throat. These symptoms can be position-related (worse with lying down) and are often worse around the time of eating or shortly thereafter. Some people experience a brief sensation of their throat or airway closing-off which can be related to acid reflux. Laryngopharyngeal reflux is not necessarily associated with heartburn, indigestion, or ulcer disease.

Laryngopharyngeal Reflux can be difficult to completely eradicate. Most people will improve with a combination of acid suppression therapy and reflux precautions. Acid suppression therapy involves taking one of the proton pump inhibitors such as Prilosec, Protonix, Zegerid, Prevacid, Aciphex, or Nexium for an extended period of time. Reflux precautions are behavior modifications which minimize reflux.

Commonly employed reflux precautions are listed below:

- 1) Elevate your head of bed by 4 to 6 inches by placing blocks or books under the headposts of your bed. This will decrease gravity-related reflux. Placing pillows under your head or back is not productive because it can cause intra-abdominal pressure to increase, thereby increasing reflux.
- 2) Eat small volume meals. Do not eat within 3 hours of bedtime.
- 3) Avoid caffeinated beverages, chocolate, alcohol, tobacco, and spicy foods as these things decrease the tone of the muscular valves guarding against reflux. As a result, reflux tends to increase.
- 4) If you are constantly clearing your throat, then you must try and stop. Clearing the throat is irritating to your voice box and perpetuates the cycle. Use a throat lozenge or drink a small sip of water when you feel the need to clear your throat.