

Mosby's Medical, Nursing & Allied Health Dictionary, 6th Edition, defines heartburn as: *a painful burning sensation in the oesophagus just below the sternum. Heartburn is usually caused by the reflux of gastric contents into the oesophagus but may result from gastric hyperacidity or peptic ulcer. Antacids relieve the symptoms but do not cure the condition.* In medical circles, heartburn is known as Gastro-Esophageal Reflux Disease or GERD – in Australia **GORD or Gastro Oesophageal Reflux Disease**

Medicines for stomach and upper digestive system problems are currently the largest selling medicines in the country, an amount totalling billions of dollars per year. In most cases, heartburn is treated with medications that lower stomach acidity – antacids.

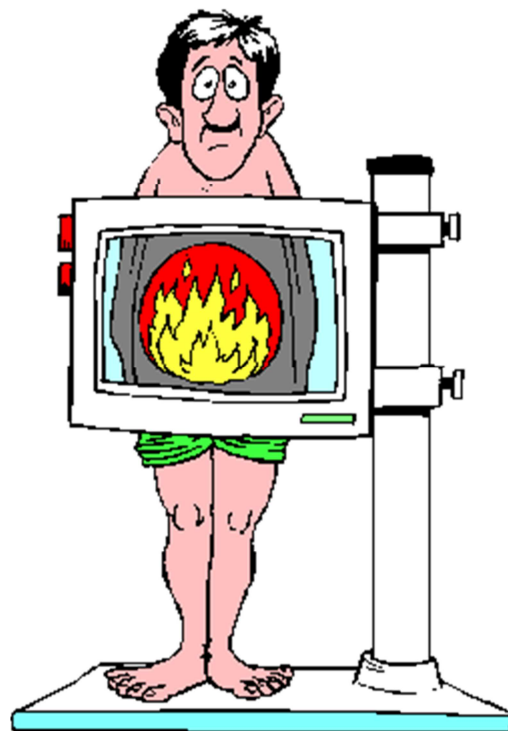
It is interesting to note that the reflux can be caused by both too much and not enough stomach acids. Stomach acids, mainly hydrochloric acid, is not only necessary for protein digestion, but it protects against a variety of gastrointestinal infections. Long term blocking of this acid is a very poor strategy indeed.ⁱ

Dr. Thomas Cowan, in his article [How to Treat GERD](#), states that there are two main theories behind the cause of this problem. One theory, typically used in conventional medicine, says that there is too much stomach acid being produced, which necessitates the use of acid blockers.

The other theory, which Dr. Cowan ascribes to, is that acid is not the problem, but the solution. As GERD was most commonly seen in the elderly, the very group of people who struggle the most to create stomach acid, the solution is to encourage its production by eating more protein and fewer carbohydrates. [Research](#) into this matter has provided some evidence that this theory may actually be correct.

The researchers were unable to definitively say why this had occurred but they postulated that the lower carb intake influenced the activity of various hormones that open and close the valve between the oesophagus and the stomach.ⁱⁱ

Another factor influencing stomach acid levels is stress, as our emotional issues such as resentment, fear and trauma also create "negative chemistry" (including acid) in our bodies. This is a well-known medical fact and should be included among the causes of most physical ailments. Regrettably, it tends to be ignored.ⁱⁱⁱ



ⁱ Tom Cowan, MD, The Weston A. Price Foundation

ⁱⁱ http://www.mercola.com/2003/apr/23/gerd_treatment.htm

ⁱⁱⁱ Gary Craig - http://www.mercola.com/2005/jun/14/surgery_heartburn.htm