

Asthma as Related to Acid Reflux

Asthma is a chronic lung condition that is characterized by breathing difficulties. People who suffer from asthma have air passages that are extra sensitive or hyper-responsive. In the course of an asthma attack, the airways become irritated and react by narrowing and constricting, causing increased resistance to airflow, and obstruction of the flow of air through the air passages to and from the lungs.

There is research to indicate that the symptoms of asthma may worsen when stomach acid rises in your throat. This condition is called gastro-oesophageal reflux disease, or GERD. It is commonly referred to as acid reflux. One result of acid reflux is painful heartburn which can be relieved with the administration of antacid medicines. These are special medications which neutralize stomach acids. Acid reflux commonly affects older and overweight people. However, it can also occur in children and people of all types.

There have been studies in which researchers have injected acid into the stomachs of asthma sufferers and it had a significant impact on their asthma resulting in worsened asthma symptoms. Evidence also suggest that asthma sufferers get acid reflux with greater frequency than people who do not suffer from asthma. This is probably due to great pressure changes present in the chest of people with asthma during the course of breathing. This high pressure could cause liquid to travel up the esophagus from the stomach. In these cases, it would seem that people who have asthma lose out twice: they suffer from asthma and they may suffer from acid reflux more often than people who do not suffer from asthma. However, there is more to this story. If acid reflux was an genuine and important cause of increase in asthma severity, then acid reflux treatments should make the asthma better, however, this is generally not the case.

In the meantime, if you suffer from both asthma and acid reflux, it could just be that careful management of your reflux will ease your breathing. If your asthma is severe and the cause is unknown, some doctors might test to see whether you have or had acid reflux by conducting tests to measure your stomach acidity. If the result showed acid reflux tendencies, then your doctor would most likely attempt to improve your lungs by treating your stomach.