

Throat Burn & Lump in my Throat - “Silent Reflux”

Stomach contents are normally acidic (strong enough to melt steel!) and kept in your stomach by a valve at the lower end of your esophagus (food pipe). **Reflux** is a term used when the stomach contents (**acidic or not**) go up the esophagus in the wrong direction. Those contents can end up in your **throat, sinuses, mouth or even lungs**. Most often this happens at **nighttime, after meals or when you strain extra hard** (lifting, bending or pooping.) When the stomach erupts like a volcano, we call that **“heartburn” and you really feel it**. However when there is only a slow, continuous (non-painful) lava flow, that is called **“silent reflux”**. The technical term is Laryngo-Pharyngeal Reflux and **you don't feel it**.

Your throat symptoms result from direct **irritation of the throat lining, throat muscles, voice box and even wind pipe and sinuses** (your throat starts at the back of your nose so **post nasal drip** is common). What happens is your throat is injured so its natural response is to contract and either try to swallow, so you feel **a constant lump in the throat**, or you keep **clearing your throat** to get rid of **“phlegm” or a “tickle”**. This phenomenon is called **Globus** and is basically a **partial swallow or cramp in your throat muscle**. That is why it can be **hard to swallow** pills or certain foods because they get **“stuck”** in a throat which is already swallowing. You may also find you are **swallowing all the time**. And if that weren't enough, some of these cramped muscles are also used by your vocal cords so you may have **voice problems or chronic cough** (the lungs don't like acid in them).

In severe cases, the throat can be **very sore, irritated or feel “very dry”**. This can result in a **powerful gag reflex**. Strong enough throat muscle cramps or spasm can even lead to **choking spells and breathing problems like “asthma”** (you can either breathe or you can swallow... you cannot do both!) Even **one or both of your ears can hurt** because the throat and ears share the same pain nerves.

After your throat exam today (to rule out **rare but serious** growths) , we may ask you to try a prescription **acid reducing medicine** such as **Tecta, Pariet, Zantac or Dexilant**. You may also buy Zantac over-the-counter and take it at bedtime. Many people find benefit from **Tums, Rolaids, Pepcid** and other over-the-counter acid suppressors. However, here are some **natural ways to reduce the acidity** of (and injury to) your throat:

1. **Elevate the head of your mattress 6 inches. Extra pillows actually make it worse!**
2. Try to keep your **weight reasonable**. Too much fat can push up on your stomach.
3. Eat **smaller meals** every 3-4 hours while awake.
4. **Stress, anxiety, depression, coffee, alcohol and cigarettes** increase acid levels.
5. Buy the Book: **Dropping Acid – The Reflux Diet**, by Dr. J. Koufmann. (Amazon.ca)
6. Avoid **danger foods** like strong spices, tomatoes, citrus and fruit juices.
7. Try **Ginger Essential Oil** 1-2 drops in a glass of water/herbal tea or in a vegetable capsule.
8. Try **Apple Cider Vinegar** 1 tbsp on your salad or in your tea – decreases your acidity naturally.

One last thing, **an injured throat can take months (even years) to heal so be patient with yourself**. Remember, we cannot put a bandage or cast down there and the injured throat **moves when you talk, eat, drink, laugh, breathe and even sleep**. It may even get **worse**, before it gets better.

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Natural Ways to Reduce Your Throat Symptoms: Choose One Of The Following With Each Meal & Bedtime

1. Ginger:

- Good quality Ginger Essential Oil (I recommend doTERRA, 1-2 drops before bed in water/tea or in vegetable capsule, can be done 3 times a day for maximum benefit, total of 6 drops)
- Pure ginger root
- Ginger tea
- Ginger candy
- (NO GINGER ALE – IT WILL BLOAT YOU UP!)
- Ginger Gel CAPSULES (Non-Medicinal), made by Graval Company



2. Apple Cider Vinegar CAPSULES, or
Mix 1/2 tsp of baking soda, 2 Tbsp of Apple Cider Vinegar in 1-2 cups of water and take 1-3 times a day as needed.
3. Take 'Alkaline Water' (pH of 8.8) with each meal and at bedtime.
 - 1/4 of Alka Seltzer or
 - 1/4 teaspoon of Baking Soda
 - or ENO
 - or Baking Soda Pills (Prescription)