



## **Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD), and heart burn management**

### **What is GERD?**

GERD is a digestive disorder that affects the ring of muscle between the esophagus and stomach, causing acid to flow from the stomach to back up into the esophagus. When stomach acid comes into contact with the walls of the esophagus it often causes heartburn.

### **Why do I need to follow a GERD diet?**

Certain foods and lifestyle choices can increase the back-up of stomach acid, making symptoms worse. If you have symptoms of heartburn, avoiding certain foods can help decrease the burning you feel.

The types of foods that bother people with heartburn can vary a lot; not all foods mentioned in this paragraph will bother everyone with heartburn. Keeping a written record of which foods cause you discomfort can be very helpful. Foods that can trigger symptoms can include spices, peppermint, chocolate, citrus juices, onions, garlic and tomato. Some people with heartburn report an increase in symptoms following a high fat meal.

### **Lifestyle changes you can take are:**

Achieve and maintain a healthy weight, stop smoking, limit or avoid beverages that contain alcohol, limit or avoid drinks with caffeine such as coffee, tea or cola drinks, remain sitting upright during meals and for 45 to 60 minutes after eating. Avoid eating two to three hours before bedtime if possible, and avoid eating large amounts of food at one time. Raise the head of your bed six to eight inches when sleeping. Special foam wedges called "bed blocks" are great for this purpose, pillows alone may not be adequate as they raise only your head. Your chest should be higher than your stomach so that stomach acid can't back flow into the esophagus. For that same reason, avoid clothing that is tight across your stomach.

Therapeutic Meals has a range of foods that are GERD friendly and are prepared without the "usual suspects". All our foods have ingredients listed on the nutrition label on the website so you can avoid your food triggers. To order our meals please visit [www.therapeuticmeals.com](http://www.therapeuticmeals.com).

If you would like help from our Registered Dietitian to identify your trigger foods, or to create a personalized meal plan, contact [Jenneke@therapeuticmeals.com](mailto:Jenneke@therapeuticmeals.com) or call 250 415 5444 for an appointment.