

FROM THE EXPERTS

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Acid Reflux (Heart Burn)

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An estimated 33% of Americans suffer with acid reflux, commonly referred to as “heart burn.” Acid reflux has become one of the most expensive chronic gastrointestinal diseases, costing Americans \$10 billion each year. Acid reflux occurs when the muscle at the top of your stomach, called the gastroesophageal sphincter, allows acid to flow up into your esophagus causing that “heart burn” sensation. The most common medical treatment for this symptom is the prescription of proton pump inhibitors (PPI), such as the drugs Prilosec, Nexium or Prevacid, among many others. These drugs reduce the amount of acid being secreted by your stomach to help reduce reflux, but does this address

the cause and improve your health? No.

Recently I saw a pharmaceutical ad for the drug Prilosec that featured Larry the Cable Guy. It showed him taking Prilosec so that he could eat fried chicken and corndogs without getting heart burn. This particular drug company actually suggests that if you get heart burn two or more days a week, “treat it” by blocking the acid with Prilosec. The whole concept is ludicrous. Larry doesn’t have heart burn because he has “too much acid.” He has heart burn because he is eating garbage and his stomach doesn’t like it.

Medications like Prilosec may help take away the symptoms of heart burn, but it comes at a cost. A recent article published in JAMA reported that taking acid reflux medications increases your risk of developing dementia by 44%. As if that isn’t bad enough, it also increases your risk of developing heart disease and kidney disease. Who really cares if your heart burn goes away if you can’t remember anything, develop heart disease and need dialysis 3 times a week (4 hours per session) because that infamous “purple pill” you took every day killed your heart and kidneys?

Addressing the cause, rather than the symptom, is the only way to truly improve health and function. A few common causes of heart burn include a deficiency in exercise, poor diet, probiotic deficiency, stress and spinal misalignments. Your cause may be one of these, or a combination of them all. By identifying and correcting the cause, not only will you cure your heart burn, but you will begin sleeping better, develop more energy, reduce aches and pains and start improving your overall health. Don’t be like Larry the Cable Guy!

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