

## **ACID REFLUX DISEASE**

- Knowledge Attitude Practice** After working through this lesson, participants will be able to
1. Describe the digestive tract.
  2. Explain what acid reflux disease is.
  3. List ways to prevent acid reflux.
  4. Teach others with the acid reflux book.

**Overview** This series of lessons is based on the *Health Education Program for Developing Communities*, which is available from <http://hepfdc.info/>

These lessons are accompanied by a series of health teaching booklets on the individual topics. They are based on information and standards from the World Health Organization and can be used with adults or with older children and teens

- Materials** *Collect these items before beginning the lesson:*
- Poster-size paper, markers, and masking tape
  - Handouts:
    - *Digestive Tract*
    - *Preventing Acid Reflux*
  - Acid Reflux Disease picture book or picture page

### **LESSON**

60 minutes

**Illustration:** (5 minutes)

*Instructions:* Show or draw the picture, *Digestive Tract*. What happens to food after you eat it?

Ask SH Questions:

What did you **S**ee?

What was **H**appening?

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**Acid Reflux Disease** (5 minutes)

## HEALTH EDUCATION: ACID REFLUX DISEASE

### A. What happens to food after you eat it?

Have one participant show the route as the others describe it.

1. When you swallow food, it passes from the mouth into the esophagus and on to the stomach.
2. The esophagus is the food tube between the mouth and the stomach.
3. From the stomach, the food passes to the small intestines, where much of it is digested.
4. The liver and the pancreas make chemicals to help digest or break down the food.
5. Much of the food is digested and absorbed, to build the body and give it energy.
6. The remainder of the undigested food passes on to the colon (large intestine) and the rectum.
7. Stool (poop) is passed out of the body at the anus.

### B. What is acid reflux?

Have one person show the reflux of food from the stomach to the esophagus and mouth.

1. Reflux means to flow back or return.
2. Sometimes the food in the stomach goes back up into the esophagus or even into the mouth.
3. The valve or sphincter between the stomach and the esophagus opens so the food can escape
4. Digestive juices or acid from the stomach mixes with the food, giving it an acid taste.
5. When acid from the stomach reaches the lining of the esophagus, it causes a burning feeling or heartburn.

### C. What is acid reflux disease?

1. Everyone has reflux once in a while.
2. But reflux that occurs frequently may damage the esophagus and cause pain.
3. This pain is called heartburn or acid indigestion.
4. Heartburn is a common cause of pain in the upper stomach and lower chest.
5. Another name for acid reflux is gastroesophageal reflux disease, or GERD.

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### **Preventing Acid Reflux** (20 minutes)

#### A. Give out the Preventing Acid Reflux handout. What are some ways to prevent acid reflux? Why does this work? Work in small groups and report back.

1. Stop smoking! Smoking increases acid production and weakens the sphincter muscle at the bottom of the esophagus.
2. Avoid alcohol. Alcohol also weakens the sphincter and increases the acid reflux.
3. If you have acid reflux, avoid aspirin and medicines like ibuprofen.
4. Go for a walk after meals.
5. Don't lie down for two or three hours after a meal.
6. If you have reflux when you sleep, lie on your left side, and raise the head of the bed about 15 cm. (or 6 to 8 inches). Put wooden blocks under the bedposts.
7. Cut down on fried or fatty foods, coffee, soda, and spicy or "hot" foods since they may trigger heartburn.
8. Lose weight if you are overweight.
9. Eat smaller portions or smaller foods. (You may need to eat more often with smaller meals.)

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10. Garlic, onions, and tomatoes and spaghetti sauce may make reflux worse.
11. Chocolate and peppermints may make reflux worse.
12. Avoid foods that make your reflux worse.
13. Wear loose-fitting clothes.

**B. Are there medicines to prevent reflux?**

1. Yes, there are many medicines to prevent or treat reflux.
2. Antacids block the acids in the stomach.
3. Several other medicines work in other ways.
4. Always check with your health care provider before taking medicines.

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### **Further Care** (5 minutes)

*Instructions:* Discuss in small group.

**A. When should you go see your health care provider? Go if:**

1. Your stomach pain continues or gets worse.
2. You have blood in your stool (poop).
3. You throw up blood.
4. You are losing weight.
5. You have gnawing pain in your stomach that is relieved by food.

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### **Picture Books** (20 minutes)

- A. Divide into pairs. Practice teaching each other the Acid Reflux Disease picture book or picture page.**
1. Practice teaching.
- B. During the week, visit your friends and neighbors to teach about acid reflux disease using the picture book.**
1. Home visiting

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### **Conclusion and Take-Away** (5 minutes)

Discuss together:

- A.** What did we discover in this lesson?
- B.** Who could I share this with?
- C.** What will we do differently after this lesson?
- D.** Pray together.

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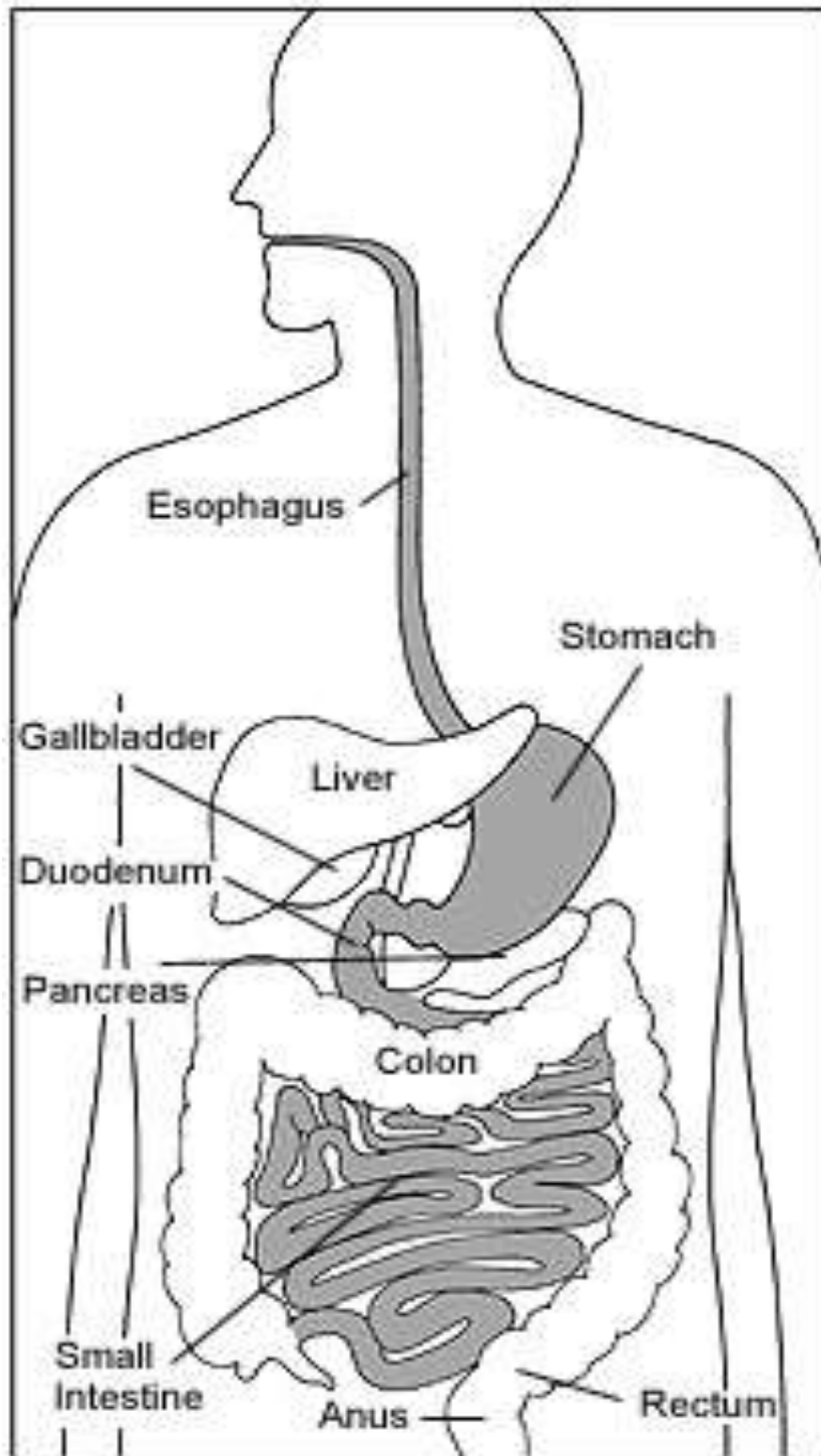
### **References:**

Health Education Program for Developing Communities. Available from: <https://hepfdc.org/>

National Digestive Diseases Information Clearinghouse. 2007. Heartburn, Gastroesophageal Reflux (GER) and Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease (GERD). Available from: <http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/gerd/>

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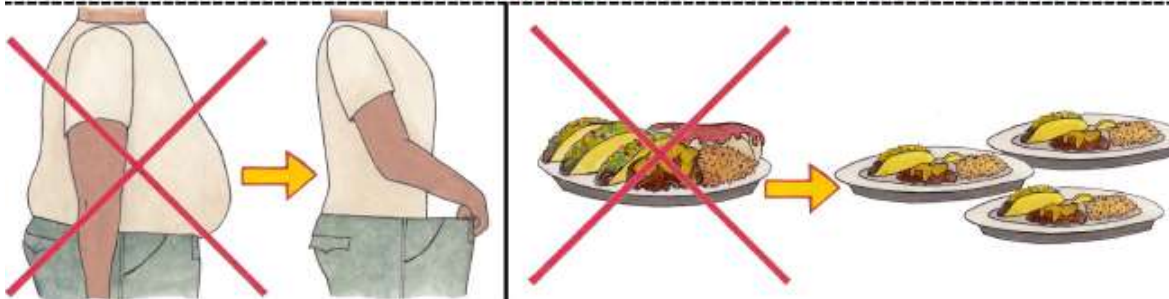
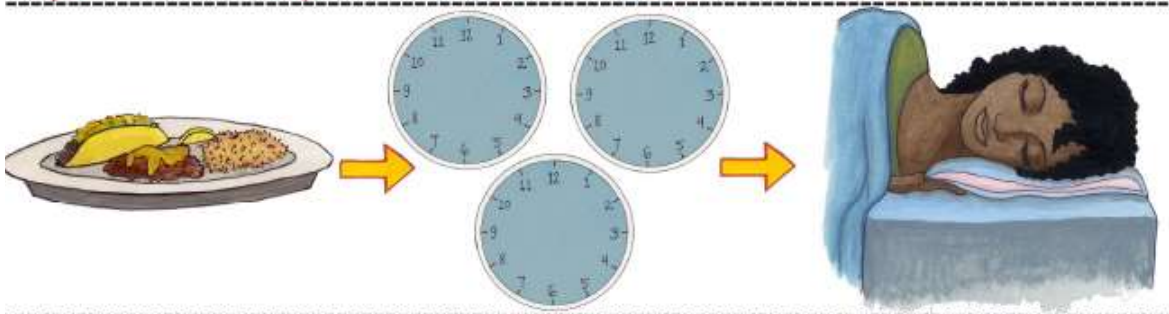
## DIGESTIVE TRACT



Source: Wikimedia. 2009. Available from: <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Uppergi.gif>

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## PREVENTING ACID REFLUX



Source: Health Education Program for Developing Communities. Available from: <https://hepfdc.org/>