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## LPR and GERD

You have evidence of stomach fluid that is creeping into your throat, irritating sensitive tissues and causing inflammation and swelling. Symptoms may include hoarseness, chronic cough, throat clearing, a sensation that something is stuck in the throat, throat pain, phlegm, heartburn, trouble swallowing, sinusitis and ear infections, among others.

**GERD** (gastroesophageal reflux disease) involves strongly acidic stomach fluid creeping into the esophagus causing a burning sensation. **LPR** (laryngopharyngeal reflux) involves weakly acidic stomach fluid creeping into the larynx in small quantities. Early treatment is very important.

Both predispose to Barrett's esophagus, or esophageal pre-cancer. This can be reversed by proper treatment. Overt esophageal cancer is no reversible by this treatment, and is a terrible, lethal disease.

GERD is frequently treated by Tums, Zantac, Pepcid or similar medications, but the most effective medications are daily proton pump inhibitors (PPI), such as Prilosec OTC (Over The Counter).

LPR usually responds to a more rigorous regimen. OTC medications generally don't give the following instructions, so ignore the box and follow the instructions below:

1. Prilosec, Omeprazole, Prevacid, Lansoprazole, Zegerid (all over the counter) or other prescription PPI twice daily.
2. Take it ½ to 1 hour prior to breakfast and dinner every day. This means not taking it with the meal, but before it, and means you should eat something for that meal.
3. Take over the counter Zantac, Pepcid, or generic equivalent, just before bedtime.
4. Avoid smoking, mint, chocolate, tomatoes, spicy foods, fatty foods, alcohol, caffeinated drinks (including some sodas and even "decaffeinated" tea or coffee) and lying down within three hours of eating. Elevating your head on pillows or with blocks under the bed frame near the head may help. It is vital to reverse obesity and weight gain.

Your insurance may cover a PPI twice per day, once per day, or they may require you to purchase it over the counter. Combine over the counter medication and what your insurance covers to take the medications as described. Taking two different medications is fine.

Frequently, no significant relief is noted before 8 weeks on this regimen, so don't give up!

Follow up with me in 2-3 months. If you don't find relief, we may need to do additional testing or change medications. If you do find relief from your symptoms, I may ask you to stop the nighttime Zantac or similar for two weeks. Then, I may ask you to cut back to one PPI dose daily for two weeks and then possibly to stop entirely. You may need to continue the diet, and activity modifications, including possible weight loss, indefinitely. It may be that symptoms will return at some point in the future. If so, then start this treatment over again and make a follow up appointment

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