

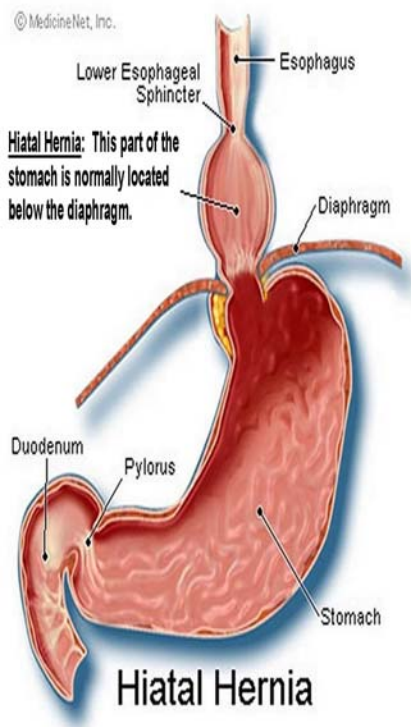
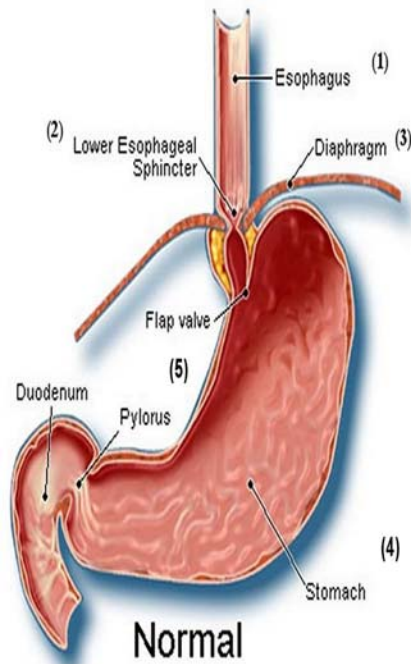
HIATAL HERNIA & HEARTBURN: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

- (1) Esophagus: the tube through which food reaches the stomach.
- (2) Lower Esophageal Sphincter (LES): a kind of muscular valve which opens to let food into the stomach and closes to keep stomach contents from backing up into the esophagus.
- (3) This is the diaphragm, a muscular partition between the abdominal cavity and the chest cavity. The opening through which the esophagus passes is called the esophageal hiatus.

When the hiatus allows the LES and part of the stomach to protrude upward into the chest cavity, the result is a hiatal hernia. This is a condition found in up to 50% of the population over the age of 50 and if no symptoms are associated with it, treatment is usually not required.

Frequently, however, patients with hiatal hernia also suffer from the symptom of heartburn. Heartburn is the result of the lower esophageal sphincter to close properly -- and this same symptom can also occur *without* hiatal hernia.

When the sphincter fails to close properly, stomach contents -- which usually contain acid -- are pushed back up into the esophagus, causing the burning sensation of heartburn. Regurgitation of food particles may also occur.



Adapted from A.H. ROBINS
Pharmaceutical Division, 1984.

- (4) In addition, stomach contractions which move the digested food along may also be weak and food is not removed from the stomach quickly enough. This can contribute to heartburn and regurgitation.
- (5) Finally at the exit of the stomach there is another valve-like opening called the pylorus, which often does not close properly, allowing bile to enter from the small intestine. Bile may also back up into the esophagus causing heartburn and discomfort.

Push your HIATAL down in the morning when you get up, before each and every meal of the day and before going to bed.

Lie down flat as possible on a bed, recliner, sofa, floor etc., and raise your knees. Relax your body as much as possible. Make a fist with your thumb inside. Place your fist at the "V" of your ribs, just beneath the BREASTBONE. Place your other hand on top the your fist for added pressure. Take a deep breath and while you are exhaling, rotate your fist downward toward the bellybutton. Repeat this procedure three times to help make sure that your HIATAL has been properly lowered.

By following the above instructions, you can do a lot of assist in preventing the occurrence of heartburn and pain.

