

Acid Reflux

Possible Causes

Pregnancy hormones that help relax the muscles of the uterus so that it can grow as baby does. These same hormones also tend to relax the muscles in the lower esophageal sphincter, a valve between the stomach and the esophagus. When the sphincter relaxes it is unable to prevent the stomach acids from rising into the esophagus, the throat, even the mouth.

Modifying Your Yoga Practice

Avoid or modify any posture that causes a flare up of symptoms. Postures that might cause an issue are postures where the head is lower than the stomach like in Downward Facing Dog, Needle or Child.

Postures to Modify

Child's Pose

Modify Child's Pose by keeping your head and heart raised rather than relaxing the head to the floor. This keeps the stomach below your heart and reduces chances of aggravating reflux. You can also elevate the torso on a bolster, stack of blankets, or birth ball.



Breathing Practice

If you experience reflux in any part of class where you are upright then you might check out your breathing. Sometimes “over breathing” can cause flare-ups of heartburn and reflux because the diaphragm puts pressure on the stomach and esophagus. Over breathing happens when you emphasize your inhale. Instead, just allow your inhale to happen naturally and focus on the exhale.

Side Lying Relaxation

If you experience reflux at night or in side lying relaxation, you can easily elevate your torso and head to create a more favorable angle for the esophagus.



Posture Awareness

Be aware of your posture in daily activities as well as your yoga practice. Keep your heart and chest lifted so as not to collapse your esophagus into your stomach.

Ayurvedic Remedies

Ayurveda is a sister science of Yoga and is the traditional medical science of India. Ayurveda teaches us that there are foods that can help pacify the acid state of the stomach. These foods are very sweet in nature like **sweet apples, sweet red grapes, coconut, honeydew, dates and cane sugar**. Other foods that are recommended include **leafy greens, salads, cabbage, broccoli, avocado, cauliflower** and sweet milky foods like **rice pudding or vanilla ice cream**. Good spices include **ginger, coriander, cinnamon and cardamom**.

Foods to avoid include foods that are oily, spicy, sour, vinegary, salty or fermented; as these types of foods are known to further relax the esophageal sphincter and raise acid levels in the stomach.