



Paris
Community
Hospital
Family
Medical
Center

June 2017

Is it heartburn or GERD?

staying
healthy

Jihui Li, MD



Dr. Li is a general surgeon who joined PCH/FMC in July 2015.

Originally from China, Dr. Li has more than 12 years of experience in general surgery. He has a great interest in minimally invasive surgery, including basic and advanced laparoscopic procedures, as well as bariatric surgery. He also performs the Laparoscopic Nissen fundoplication surgery for gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD).

Dr. Li earned his medical degree at the Second Military Medical University in Shanghai, China. Prior to joining PCH/FMC, he completed general surgery residency training at the Cleveland Clinic in Weston, Fla., where he served as chief surgical resident. He also participated in general surgery residency programs in New York and China.

He has published more than 100 papers, 40 of them as first author. Dr. Li received many honors in China for his medical achievements.

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Both may have mild symptoms

An occasional bout of heartburn, also known as acid indigestion, is common. But persistent heartburn that interferes with daily life may signal a more serious condition called gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD).

GERD is a digestive disease where acidic or non-acidic stomach contents back up into the esophagus. This occurs when a circular band of muscle around the bottom part of the esophagus – which acts like a one-way valve allowing food to pass through into the stomach – does not close properly.

The constant backwash of acid can irritate the lining of the esophagus, causing it to become inflamed. Over time, the inflammation can wear away the lining of the esophagus, causing bleeding, narrowing of the esophagus, or Barrett's esophagus (a precancerous condition).

Symptoms of GERD involve a sour taste in the mouth, chronic coughing or wheezing, or diffi-

culty swallowing. GERD is very common. There is no known single cause and most people with GERD experience mild symptoms.

Heartburn is the most common symptom of GERD. Heartburn is a burning pain in the chest, just behind the breastbone.

So, how does someone know if they have heartburn or GERD? The International Foundation for Functional Gastrointestinal Disorders recommends talking to a healthcare provider when experiencing the following:

- Heartburn that occurs two or more times a week
- Symptoms that become more severe
- Heartburn that happens at night and interrupts sleep
- Heartburn that has occurred for several years
- Difficulty or pain when swallowing
- Discomfort or pain when performing daily activities

According to the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases,

GERD affects about 20 percent of Americans. Individuals more likely to have GERD include those who smoke, have diabetes, are overweight or obese, or are pregnant. GERD can be caused by certain medications, as well as by a hiatal hernia, which occurs when part of the stomach pushes up through the diaphragm.

Several tests can be done to diagnose GERD. They include X-rays and an upper gastrointestinal (GI) endoscopy, which uses a thin, flexible tube with a tiny TV camera at the end to view the lining of the esophagus, stomach, and small bowel.

GERD can be controlled by avoiding greasy foods, spicy foods, and alcoholic drinks, and quitting smoking. Taking over-the-counter antacids can help reduce symptoms. Depending on the severity of symptoms, lifestyle changes and/or medicines may be recommended.

Dr. Jihui Li, general surgeon, performs minimally invasive surgery for GERD. For more information, contact his office at 217-466-4543.



Feeling sluggish? Maybe it's low magnesium

Feeling tired, weak, or have muscle cramps? Or maybe you are feeling anxious, or struggling with poor memory or high blood pressure.

These are all symptoms of magnesium deficiency. However, note that these symptoms do not necessarily mean that someone is definitely deficient in magnesium.

According to the Harvard Medical School, magnesium is involved in more than 300 metabolic processes in the body. Muscles need magnesium to contract, and nerves need it to send and receive messages. Magnesium keeps the heart beating steadily, the immune system strong, and contributes to the development of bones. Most people can get enough magnesium by eating foods such as green leafy vegetables, whole grains, beans, nuts, and fish.

For people who have trouble absorbing magnesium from food — such as those with celiac disease, kidney problems, alcoholism, or chronic digestive problems — supplements can be useful, the Harvard Medical School states. Medicines (including some “water pills” and antibiotics) can also interfere with magnesium absorption, making a supplement necessary.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) interestingly notes that magnesium deficiency is related to factors that promote headaches. However, research on the use of magnesium supplements to prevent or reduce migraine headaches is limited. The American Academy of Neurology and the American Headache Society concludes that magnesium therapy is “probably effective” for preventing migraines.

The NIH recommends men age 31 to 50-plus get 420 milligrams of magnesium per day (320 milligrams for women). Magnesium-rich foods include the following:

- Dry roasted almonds (80 mgs/ounce)
- Spinach (78 mgs/half cup)
- Bran flakes (64 mgs/three-quarter cup)
- Medium baked potato with skin (48 mgs)

The NIH states that too much magnesium from food does not pose a health risk in healthy individuals because the kidneys eliminate excess amounts in the urine. However, high doses of magnesium from dietary supplements or medications often result in diarrhea that can include nausea and abdominal cramping.

It further states that individuals at risk for not getting adequate amount of magnesium include older adults and those with gastrointestinal diseases, Type 2 diabetes, and chronic alcoholism. These individuals typically consume insufficient amounts of magnesium, have medical conditions, or take medications that reduce magnesium absorption or increase mineral losses from the body.

Magnesium levels can be determined through a blood test. Since magnesium is an electrolyte, a magnesium test may be ordered when testing other electrolytes — such as sodium, potassium, chloride, calcium, and phosphorus.

If magnesium is low, it is not unusual for potassium also to be low. Electrolytes are important, as they help move nutrients into and wastes out of the body's cells, maintain a healthy water balance, and stabilize the body's acid/base (pH) level.



Paris Community Hospital Family Medical Center

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staying healthy

PCH/FMC's Community Healthcare Programs June & July

Hospital Annual Meetings

June 12

The annual meetings of the Hospital & Medical Foundation of Paris, Inc. and Paris Community Hospital Foundation, Inc. will take place at 7 pm in the Family Medical Center. Members are encouraged to attend and refreshments will be served.

Free Adult CPR/AED Class

June 14

This free, non-healthcare provider course teaches basic CPR and the use of an automated external defibrillator (AED). The class takes place from 8 am to 1 pm in Conference Room D. To register, email Somer Nagrodski at SNagrodski@pchfmc.com or call 217-465-2606, Ext. 4320. When calling, leave your name and you will be registered.

Medical Weight Loss Seminar

June 20; July 18

A free informational session regarding PCH/FMC's Medical Weight Loss Clinic will take place at 5:30 pm in the Family Medical Center. The program utilizes a medically supervised, scientifically based approach that promotes fat loss while supporting muscle mass. To register, call 217-465-CARE (2273).

Monthly Health Screenings

June 21; July 6

Blood sugar, blood pressure, and lipid panel (HDL, LDL, and triglycerides) screenings will be held from 7 to 9 am each day. Fasting for eight hours in advance is required. The cost is \$25. To register, call 217-465-2606 (or toll free 1-866-465-4141), Ext. 4228.

Clinic Closures

July 4

The Family Medical Centers in Paris, Chrisman, and Oakland will be closed in recognition of Independence Day. The EZ Care walk-in clinic, located at 2200 S. Main Street in Paris, will be open from 9 am to 7 pm.

Financial Assistance Available

PCH/FMC understands the financial concerns that families have due to unplanned healthcare costs. Therefore, we offer financial assistance to families who may not be able to pay for their healthcare. Call 217-465-2606, Ext. 4257.

Join our Text Club for information
about classes, upcoming events,
closings, and more.

Text to: 36000
Message: T975

“Staying Healthy” is a free monthly publication brought to you by Paris Community Hospital and the Family Medical Center network, with clinics in Paris, Chrisman, and Oakland, as well as the EZ Care walk-in clinic. For more information, call 217-465-2606, Ext. 4287, or visit ParisCommunityHospital.com.