



## Looking After Your Throat & Voice: Throat Reflux Tips

LPR (laryngopharyngeal reflux) symptoms happen when stomach contents and gases whether acidic or not, move up into the throat. This can cause:

- Throat irritation
- Feeling like you need to clear your throat often
- Hoarseness or voice changes
- Coughing

Here are some tips to help manage symptoms and protect your throat.

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### 1. Stay Hydrated

Water is your **best friend** for a healthy throat. Well-hydrated tissues produce **thinner, easier-to-manage mucus**, which is less irritating. This is especially important if you take **antihistamines**, which can dry out your throat and nose.

#### Ways to keep your throat and nose hydrated

- **Drink plenty of water** throughout the day. Regular sipping is much better than less frequent chugging.
- Use a **home humidifier** (electric or hung over a radiator) to add moisture to the air.
- Use **saline nasal spray or rinse** (e.g., Sterimar, Neilmed) to keep your nose moist.
- If available, **nebulise 0.9% saline** to hydrate your airways.

💡 **Tip:** Well-hydrated mucus is thinner and easier to swallow, which reduces throat irritation and coughing.

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### 2. How You Eat Matters

The way you eat can affect reflux. Small changes can make a big difference.

- **Take your time eating** – chew food thoroughly.
  - **Eat mindfully** – focus on your meal to avoid overeating, which can trigger reflux.
  - **Limit drinks at mealtimes** – drinking too much at once stretches your stomach and can make reflux worse.
  - **Avoid pressure on your stomach** - from clothes or belts that are too tight. Also from eating too much. Only eat to 80% fullness.
  - **Posture** – sit up, don't slouch and stay upright for 30 minutes after meals.
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### 3. Managing Throat Irritation

It is natural to want to clear your throat, but **excessive throat clearing can make irritation worse**. Repetitive clearing slams your vocal cords together and makes your throat feel irritated.

#### Tips to take control

- Try a **hard swallow** or gently **blow out the irritation**.
  - Use **distraction techniques**: chew sugar-free gum (not mint), suck a lozenge, or sip water – these encourage saliva and swallowing.
  - Instead of clearing your throat, try: **humming, blowing bubbles or swallowing**.
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### 4. Medications That Can Help

Some people find relief from medications:

- **Alginate-based** treatments (Gaviscon, Gaviscon Advance) create a protective barrier in the stomach to prevent reflux of gas, acid and non-acid contents. This is the most effective treatment for LPR and should be taken after every meal.
- **PPIs** (omeprazole, pantoprazole, esomeprazole) reduce stomach acid. This helps some, but not all patients.

**💡 Tip:** Medication works best when combined with hydration, relaxation, posture and eating strategies.

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#### Extra Tips for Your Throat

- **Relaxation matters** – stress slows digestion and increases reflux. Breathing exercises, mindfulness or gentle movement can help.
  - Avoid **overly acidic foods and drinks** (citrus, tomatoes, juice) if they trigger your symptoms.
  - Avoid **alcohol and caffeine**, which can worsen reflux.
  - **Stay upright after eating** – gravity helps food pass into your stomach.
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#### Quick Summary

1. **Drink water** and keep your nose and throat hydrated.
2. **Eat slowly and mindfully**, with smaller meals and less drink during meals.
3. **Avoid excessive throat clearing** – use swallowing, humming, or lozenges instead.
4. **Use Gaviscon after every meal (plus PPI medications if prescribed by your doctor)**.
5. **Relaxation and posture** help reduce symptoms.