LARYNGO-PHARYNGEAL REFLUX INFORMATION

Problem:
- Gastro-esophageal refluxing is a disorder where the sphincter between the esophagus and stomach does not function well and allows acid from the stomach to move into the esophagus, pharynx, and larynx.
- This may or may not be associated with hiatal hernia.
- All patients with hiatal hernias do not have gastro-esophageal reflux and vice-versa.

Symptoms:
- Patients who have gastro-esophageal reflux may have NO symptoms of indigestion.
- The symptoms may be related ONLY to the throat (pharynx) and/or voice box (larynx). Symptoms may be one or more of the following:
  - A feeling of a lump in the throat.
  - Difficulty swallowing.
  - Recurrent sore throats.
  - Intermittent or chronic hoarseness or other voice problems.
  - Frequent clearing of throat because of a feeling of something in the throat or of swelling in the throat.
  - Redness and/or swelling of the larynx on examination.
  - Tenderness on examination of the mid and lower throat area.
  - Coughing of unknown etiology.

Treatment:
- Elevate the head of bed with four to six-inch blocks of wood or two bricks under each bedpost at the head of the bed, or use a foam wedge on top of the mattress or between box springs and mattress to elevate the back and head.
- Avoid all types of caffeine products including coffee, tea, caffeinated soft drinks and chocolates.
- Avoid all aspirin and aspirin products which include a combination of aspirin, such as Anacin, Excedrin, Alka-Seltzer.
- Avoid all spicy, hot foods, reduce fatty foods, carminatives (peppermint and spearmint), garlic, cinnamon, onions. Avoid alcohol and cigarettes.
- Avoid eating food or drinking (other than water) for three hours prior to going to bed so that the stomach does not have a lot of acid in it.
- Eat small, frequent meals to prevent stomach distention and resulting gastric acid secretion.
- Avoid high-fat meals and decrease fat in the diet. Fat decreases lower esophageal sphincter pressure.
- Lose weight if overweight.
- Avoid tight-fitting clothing, especially after a meal.
- A prescription medication such as Prilosec, Nexium, Aciphex, Dexilant, or Zantac may be necessary.