



Herbal Support for GERD

A safety-first guide to soothing support and everyday habits

FOR ADULT EDUCATION | REVIEWED AUGUST 2026

READ THIS FIRST

Herbs may soothe mild discomfort, but they do not stop every cause of reflux, heal complications, or replace appropriate medical care.

HERBAL JOURNAL TIP

If nighttime reflux is a problem, finish eating at least 3 hours before lying down.



A three-part approach

1 Reduce reflux

Use meal timing, posture, sleep position, and personal trigger awareness.

2 Soothe gently

Choose one simple preparation and notice whether it truly helps.

3 Track patterns

Record timing, meals, position, stress, medicines, and symptom response.

Daily foundations with the strongest practical support

MEAL TIMING

Finish eating at least 3 hours before lying down or bedtime if nighttime symptoms occur.

SLEEP ANGLE

Raise the head and upper back 6 to 8 inches with a wedge or bed elevation.

PERSONAL TRIGGERS

Reduce alcohol intake and limit other foods or drinks that reliably worsen symptoms; triggers differ by person.

SMOKING

Quitting smoking may reduce symptoms and improves health far beyond reflux.

WEIGHT, IF RELEVANT

For people with overweight or obesity, clinician-guided weight loss can reduce GERD symptoms.



Gentle preparations, used thoughtfully

Use one herb at a time, start with a modest serving, and stop if symptoms worsen. These are traditional supportive preparations, not proven GERD treatments.

Marshmallow cold maceration

Althaea officinalis L. - root

DEMULCENT

EMA recognizes marshmallow root as a traditional demulcent for the symptomatic relief of mild gastrointestinal discomfort.

- 1 Place 3 to 5 g cut marshmallow root in a clean covered jar. Weigh when possible; spoon volume varies by cut.
- 2 Add 6 to 8 fl oz cool drinking water. Stir, cover, and steep 4 to 8 hours or overnight.
- 3 Strain well. Sip slowly and notice your response. Refrigerate promptly and use within 24 hours.
- 4 Keep at least 1 hour between marshmallow and oral medicines; ask a pharmacist if a longer interval is needed.

WHY IT MAY FIT

Cool water draws out the root's slippery mucilage. The soothing action may feel helpful, but it does not stop the physical reflux mechanism.

Simple chamomile infusion

Matricaria recutita L. - flower

TRADITIONAL GI

EMA recognizes chamomile flower for traditional relief of minor gastrointestinal complaints such as bloating and minor spasms.

- 1 Place 1.5 to 2 g dried chamomile flowers in a cup. Weigh when possible for consistency.
- 2 Add 6 to 8 fl oz just-boiled water. Cover and steep 5 to 10 minutes.
- 3 Strain and sip warm, not very hot. Stop if it increases burning, nausea, or discomfort.
- 4 Avoid if allergic to ragweed-family plants. Review use with a clinician if you take warfarin, sedatives, or other medicines.

WHY IT MAY FIT

Chamomile may feel calming when tension, bloating, or minor spasm accompanies symptoms. It is not known to repair an impaired reflux barrier.

Make the pattern visible

For seven days, record the smallest useful set of details. Change only one variable at a time.

DATE / TIME	MEAL + POSITION	SYMPTOMS 0-10	WHAT HELPED?



Safety matters more than any remedy

GERD can overlap with heart, esophageal, medication-related, and other conditions. Do not use herbs to delay evaluation of warning symptoms.

Get medical help

Emergency: New or severe chest pain can be heart-related. Call emergency services, especially with shortness of breath, sweating, faintness, or pain spreading to the arm, jaw, or back.

Prompt review: Trouble or pain with swallowing; persistent vomiting; blood or coffee-ground-like vomit; black, tarry or bloody stool; loss of appetite; unexplained weight loss; or symptoms that persist despite appropriate self-care.

Herb cautions worth remembering

Licorice is not a casual default

Glycyrrhizin-containing licorice can cause serious effects, including irregular heartbeat. Risk is higher with high blood pressure, heart or kidney conditions, high salt intake, large amounts, or long use. NCCIH says digestive benefit is unclear. DGL removes glycyrrhizin, but still deserves medication and condition review.

Marshmallow + chamomile

Marshmallow may delay absorption of oral medicines. Keep at least 1 hour before or after medicines, and ask a pharmacist if a longer interval is needed. Chamomile can cause allergic reactions, especially with ragweed-family allergy, and may interact with warfarin, sedatives, and other medicines.

SAFER DEFAULT

If pregnant or breastfeeding, under 18, managing kidney, heart, liver, bleeding, or hormone-sensitive conditions, or taking prescription medicines, review any medicinal herb with a qualified clinician or pharmacist first.

Sources and evidence notes

- 1 **GERD treatment and lifestyle**
NIDDK / NIH
niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/acid-reflux-ger-gerd-...
- 2 **GERD symptoms and warning signs**
NIDDK / NIH
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- 3 **Eating, diet and nutrition**
NIDDK / NIH
niddk.nih.gov/health-information/digestive-diseases/acid-reflux-ger-gerd-...

- 4 **Marshmallow root monograph**
European Medicines Agency
ema.europa.eu/en/documents/herbal-monograph/final-european-union-herbal-m...
- 5 **Chamomile: uses and safety**
EMA and NCCIH / NIH
nccih.nih.gov/health/chamomile
- 6 **Licorice root: usefulness and safety**
NCCIH / NIH
nccih.nih.gov/health/licorice-root

Educational reference only; not medical diagnosis or individualized treatment. Traditional-use monographs document long-standing use and plausible safety, not proof that an herb treats GERD. Prepared for Herbal Journal readers. Reviewed August 25, 2026.