

# What Causes Heartburn

## VOCABULARY

- \***LES** – (*Lower esophageal sphincter*) a bundle of muscles at the low end of the esophagus, where it meets the stomach
- \***GERD** – (*Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease*) a digestive disorder that occurs when acidic stomach juices, or food and fluids back up from the stomach into the esophagus
- \***Hernia** – a medical condition which is often caused by strain or injury. It results in one of your internal organs sticking through a weak point in the surrounding tissue
- \***Vegetative State** – unable to move, think, or speak, and their condition is not likely to improve

## COMPREHENSION

1. What are the cardinal complaints of reflux?
2. What is the primary mechanism of heartburn?
3. What are common reported dietary risk factors for heartburn?
4. What does the lower esophageal sphincter comprised of?
5. What is the most commonly reported form of reflux?

## LET'S TALK

1. Do you ever experience heartburn? *If so*, how often?
2. Did you ever realize how serious regular heartburn could become if untreated?
3. People with GERD often excessively worry about its most feared complication, esophageal cancer, even though cases of it are rare. What are ways we can effectively communicate the nature of this risk to the public?