

HEARTBURN

Heartburn is reflux of stomach acid into the esophagus, causing a burning or painful feeling in the middle of the chest. It is common in pregnancy due to the effect of pregnancy hormones to relax the digestive tract and permit the backflow of acid more easily. Also, as pregnancy advances, the enlarging uterus may press upward against the stomach and thus decrease the amount of room the stomach has to expand when food is eaten. This means the stomach is able to hold only small amounts of food; heartburn occurs more easily as food in the crowded stomach is pushed back up into the esophagus.

Measures which can be tried to prevent or relieve heartburn include the following:

1. Identify any particularly offending foods and avoid them such as: salty, greasy, spicy foods, or sweets (like cookies).
2. Avoid drinking liquids with meals, but rather drink liquids between meals to avoid overfilling of the stomach.
3. 1 tablespoon of apple cider vinegar morning and evening
4. Aloe vera juice
5. Eat small amounts of food to avoid overfilling of the stomach.
6. Eat your bigger meal at noon and lighter meal in evening.
7. Don't eat late meals.
8. Avoid lying down too soon after eating so that reflux of stomach contents is avoided.
9. When lying down, elevate the head and shoulders on pillows to avoid reflux of stomach contents.
10. Maintain good posture to allow more room in the abdomen for the stomach.
11. Chew gum
12. Suck on lemon drops.
13. Drink just 1-2 swallows of milk.
14. Drinking a small amount of grapefruit juice (about $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ cup) before meals may stimulate gastric juices and aid digestion of food.
15. Yogurt and honey may bring relief.
16. Papaya enzyme may help neutralize stomach acid. It can be purchased in health food stores.
17. Sea Bands for motion sickness found in sporting goods stores.
18. If all else fails, antacid such as Tums, Tempo, Roloids, Maalox, Mylanta, Gelusil, or Amphojel. DO NOT take antacid with iron pills, as the antacid will interfere with absorption of iron. DO NOT take baking soda preparations to relieve heartburn. Baking soda is high in both sodium and bicarbonate, which are potentially dangerous if more than very small amounts are consumed.