

## Heartburn Triggers

### 7 Spicy Foods

Peppery foods and hot sauces can be heartburn triggers. Garlic and onions can also “burn”, especially if eaten raw. This doesn’t mean you’re destined for a lifetime of bland foods, just ease up a bit on the spiciness, and remember to limit fat.

### 8 Chocolate

Chocolate, or anything made with chocolate, can be a heartburn trigger so watch your portion size.

**Tip:** Keep the big picture in mind - is that chocolate coming at the end of a fatty feast? Are you eating it by itself on an empty stomach? In short, what other heartburn triggers may be at play?

### 9 Smoking

Quit smoking if you can or avoid smoking just before, during, and after meals that seem to cause heartburn (like dinner).

*Everyone is different, so experiment to find your comfort zone. You might find it helpful to write down which foods are OK and those that lead to heartburn. Do not eliminate foods unnecessarily.*

2019 National Nutrition Centre

## More Heartburn Tips

### Try Chewing Gum

Chewing sugarless gum after a meal stimulates saliva and helps neutralize acid - just remember to avoid mint flavoured gum.

### Lose Weight If Necessary

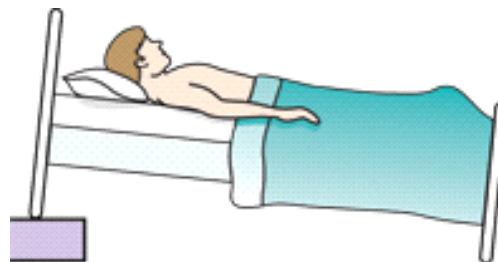
- Avoid tight belts and waistbands.
- Bend correctly (with the knees and not from the waist).

### Eat More High Fibre Foods

People who eat a high fibre diet are 20% less likely to have acid reflux symptoms, regardless of weight. Eat more whole grains (like oats), fruits, vegetables, peas and beans.

### Elevate The Head Of Your Bed

Sleep in a tilted position to help keep acid in the stomach. To do this, raise the head of the bed by using 4-6 inch blocks, or use a wedge-support under the mattress. (Extra pillows that only raise the head actually increase the risk for reflux).



## Nutrition Series



# ACID REFLUX:

## Tips to Prevent Heartburn

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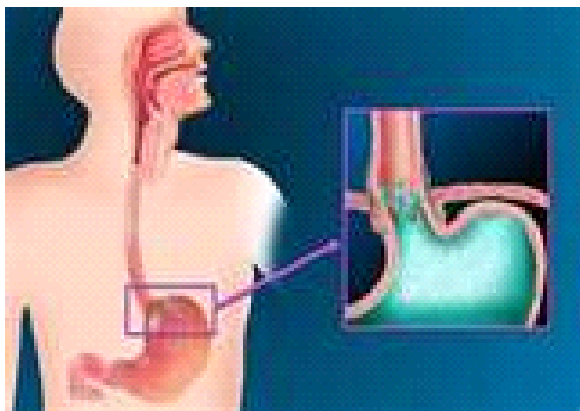
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## GERD

Heartburn, or acid reflux, is a burning discomfort from the chest area up to the throat. It happens when stomach acid flows back, or **refluxes**, into the esophagus (food pipe).



When heartburn symptoms occur at least twice each week, or interfere with daily life, it is called gastroesophageal reflux disease or GERD.

Continuous irritation of the esophagus lining, as in GERD, can cause more serious health problems so symptoms should not be ignored.

Seek advice from your medical practitioner, and read this leaflet for more information and helpful tips for preventing acid reflux.

## Heartburn Triggers

### 1 Too Much Food

The number one risk for acid reflux is the amount of food you eat. No matter what the food is, eating too much food at one time makes heartburn more likely.

Be aware that waiting too long to eat can lead to overeating and can also lead to a build up of air and acid in the stomach.

**Tip:** Eat small meals at regular times.

### 2 Eating On The Go

Eating quickly is a no-no if you want to avoid heartburn.

**Tip:** Put your fork down between mouthfuls and chew food thoroughly.

### 3 Eating Late At Night

Don't lie down after eating, and allow at least 3 hours between dinner and bedtime.

**Tip:** When going to bed, try lying on the left side rather than on the right.

## Heartburn Triggers

### 4 Fatty Foods

- Bacon, chicken and turkey wings, fried chicken and fish, pig tails
- Cakes, pastries, pies
- French fries
- Macaroni pie
- Pizza
- Nuts, coconut

**Tip:** If you do want to eat these foods, try to keep your portions small.

### 5 'Acid' Foods

- Citrus fruits and juices: grapefruit, lime, orange, pineapple
- Ketchup, pasta sauce, tomatoes
- Vinegar

**Tip:** If you want to use these foods, limit the portions; eat with other foods.

### 6 Beverages

Carbonated beverages, coffee (even "decaf"), regular tea, mint tea, alcohol (especially beer) can all cause reflux.

**Tip:** Drinking a small glass of water at the end of meals can help to wash down any stomach acid that may have splashed up into the esophagus.