

## Managing Heartburn



### Why This Diet is Important

Heartburn is caused by a back-up of stomach acid into the esophagus. When stomach acid comes into contact with the walls of the esophagus it often causes a "burning" feeling. Certain foods and lifestyle choices can increase the back-up of stomach acid, making symptoms worse. If you have symptoms of heartburn, the avoidance of certain foods can help decrease the burning that you feel. Making lifestyle changes can also help. Consult your Doctor immediately if diet and lifestyle changes do not help, or you experience vomiting, anemia, unplanned weight loss, chest pain or shortness of breath.



### Steps to Manage Your Heartburn

- Remain sitting upright during meals and for 45 to 60 minutes after eating.
- Avoid eating two to three hours before bedtime.
- Avoid eating large amounts of food at one time.
- Raise the head of your bed six to eight inches when sleeping. Try "bed blocks", special foam wedgies or a hospital bed. Pillows may not be adequate as they raise only your head. Your esophagus should be higher than your stomach.
- Achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
- Stop smoking.
- Avoid clothing that is tight across the stomach.
- Limit or avoid beverages that contain alcohol.
- Limit or avoid drinks with caffeine such as coffee, tea or cola drinks.
- Limit or avoid foods that may trigger symptoms such as spices, peppermint, chocolate, citrus juices, onions, garlic and tomato products.

**This information is not meant to replace the medical counsel of your Doctor or individual consultation with a Registered Dietitian.**



## Foods That May Cause Discomfort

The types of foods that bother people with heartburn can vary a lot. Eat a variety of foods and take note of which foods cause you discomfort. When your symptoms have settled, you may try re-introducing these foods into your diet in small amounts and as part of a meal.

You may find that eating high fat foods causes you discomfort. Some people with heartburn report an increase in symptoms following a high fat meal. Choosing lower fat food choices is also part of healthy eating and can help with weight reduction.

**Note:** If you find you are avoiding all citrus fruits and tomato products, you may want to speak to your dietitian to make sure you are getting enough vitamin C in your diet.



### Resources



### Notes

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