

Heartburn affects millions of people around the world. It occurs when stomach acid finds its way into the esophagus, which is a tube that connects the stomach and the mouth. While heartburn is not a life-threatening condition, it can lower the quality of your life and adversely affect your overall wellbeing. It is common for people who experience heartburn to use certain medications to treat it, but you can manage your heartburn effectively by making some dietary and lifestyle changes.

Heartburn Management Tips

Adopt Smart Eating Habits

The esophageal sphincter is a ring-like muscle located at the point where the esophagus connects to the stomach. It acts as a valve, preventing stomach content, including stomach acid, from climbing up the esophagus. Eating large meals puts pressure on the esophageal sphincter, leading to acid reflux. Therefore, avoid overeating and wolfing down your meals.

Maintain Healthy Weight

Excess stomach fat puts more pressure on the abdomen, pushing the esophageal sphincter upwards and further from the diaphragm's support. In medical terms, this condition is known as 'hiatus hernia' and is the primary cause of heartburn in overweight people and pregnant women. Losing the unhealthy weight can relieve symptoms of acid reflux and heartburn.

Avoid Some Foods



Some foods cause or aggravate acid reflux, leading to heartburn. Common culprits include coffee, tea, spicy foods, fatty foods, garlic, tomatoes, chocolate, peppermint, and cola. It would be best if you also stayed away from carbonated drinks since they cause belching. When you belch, the esophageal sphincter opens up, allowing stomach acid to escape into the esophagus.

Sleep on an Incline

Some people experience heartburn while they are asleep. Such people find it hard to fall and stay asleep. Using a [wedge-shaped cushion](#) to elevate your torso can offer relief from heartburn that occurs while one is sleeping. You can also raise the head of the bed to avoid acid reflux while sleeping.

Don't Eat Close to Bedtime

Eating within 3 hours of your bedtime can cause acid reflux. Therefore, eat earlier to give your stomach time to clear out before you go to bed.

Chew Gum

While chewing gum does not prevent acid reflux, it boosts the production of saliva, which helps to reduce the symptoms of heartburn in several ways. Saliva soothes the esophagus, neutralizes the stomach acid in the esophagus, and washes down the acid back into the stomach. However, avoid chewing gums flavored with peppermint and spearmint since these ingredients aggravate acid reflux.

Drink Moderately

Consumption of alcohol makes you more vulnerable to acid reflux and heartburn. Alcohol relaxes the esophageal sphincter, increases acid production in the stomach, and negatively affects the esophagus' ability to neutralize the acid. Some medical studies show moderate drinking can cause reflux symptoms even in healthy persons.

While you can treat your heartburn with medications, medical studies show you can manage heartburn and other acid reflux symptoms with simple lifestyle and dietary changes. Identify and avoid the foods and drinks that worsen your heartburn. Additionally, make some changes in your eating and sleeping patterns to ensure stomach acid does not find a way into the esophagus.

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