

DID YOU KNOW?

- Being overweight or pregnant can increase the risk of having heartburn.
- Acid Reflux over a long period of time can be serious enough to cause tooth decay.
- Anxiety or stress can worsen heartburn symptoms.
- Eliminating certain foods from your diet can help to relieve the symptoms of heartburn.
- Cutting down on alcohol can help reduce the occurrence of heartburn.
- Most people with heartburn will not have long term health problems. However If GERD is left untreated, it can lead to serious complications like esophagitis and Barrett's Esophagus

HEARTBURN/GERD

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Heartburn is a burning pain in the chest behind the breast bone or in the upper belly. The pain usually gets worse lying down or bending down. Heartburn occurs when stomach acid backs up into the tube that carries food from the mouth to the stomach (esophagus). This is also known as Acid Reflux.

Mild heartburn that occurs at least twice a week, or moderate to severe heartburn that occurs at least once a week is called Gastroesophageal Reflux (GERD).

Certain foods, drinks and even medications can trigger heartburn. Examples include; Alcohol, caffeine, carbonated drinks, fatty or fried foods, spicy foods, citric fruits, chocolates, buprofen, aspirin etc.

WHAT CAN YOU DO

Lifestyle changes and over the counter medication can help to relieve heartburn;

- Maintain a healthy weight; excess weight puts extra pressure on the abdomen, causing the stomach to push up which can lead to acid reflux.
- Avoid tight fitting clothes; which put pressure on the abdomen.
- Wait at least 3 hours before lying down after a meal.
- Avoid foods that trigger heartburn, avoid late meals and eat smaller portions.
- If you experience heartburn at night or while trying to sleep, try elevating your body from the waist up when you lie down.
- Quit smoking as smoking decreases the ability of the lower esophageal sphincter to function properly.

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