

Introduction

Heartburn, also known as indigestion or acid reflux is common in pregnancy. It is caused by acid from your stomach leaking back up the oesophagus, which connects your stomach to your mouth, resulting in a burning sensation.

By making some changes to your diet and your habits you may reduce your symptoms. However, if you have made these changes and your symptoms are not improving, if you are unable to keep food down or if you are losing weight please discuss this with your medical team or your GP.



What makes it worse?

- Avoid spicy, greasy, fatty foods
- Avoid large meals
- Avoid bending or lifting directly after a meal
- Avoid eating too close to bed time, try to leave 3 hours after eating large meals before going to bed (unless you have gestational diabetes).
- Avoid fizzy or carbonated drinks
- Limit caffeine- it is recommended during pregnancy that you should limit caffeine intake to 200mg/day e.g. 1 cup of filter coffee or 2 cups of instant coffee or 4 cups of tea. You may need to limit this amount further if you find caffeine is triggering your heartburn.
- Avoid smoking and alcohol, these should be avoided regardless of symptoms of heartburn during pregnancy

- Some people find that onion, garlic and citrus foods (juices, oranges etc.) can cause worsening of symptoms
- Avoid tight fitting clothing/ underwear, particularly around the chest and stomach



What makes it better?

- Eating small meals and snacks throughout the day instead of 3 larger meals
- Try to eat more slowly and avoid eating 'on the run' where possible
- Raising the head of your bed by adding extra pillows and waiting 3 hours after eating before going to bed/ lying down can help symptoms

- Try drinking between meals instead of with meals to reduce large stomach content
- Stress management- stress can cause worsening symptoms of reflux. Try to engage in stress reducing practices where possible e.g. meditation, exercise, reading etc.
- If symptoms are not improving talk to your healthcare provider about over-the-counter medicines, if you have gestational diabetes ensure you ask for sugar-free medicines



For further information, please see the HSE website.

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INFORMATION LEAFLET

***Department of Nutrition &
Dietetics***

Gastroesophageal Reflux Disease in Pregnancy



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