

# BEYOND ANTACIDS

MANAGING HEARTBURN WITH DIET AND LIFESTYLE CHANGES



## EAT FREQUENTLY

Eat small, frequent meals to reduce risk of an overly full stomach, which can contribute to heartburn symptoms by increasing pressure. Aim to balance small meals with high fiber carbs, quality protein and healthy fat.



## AVOID SOME FOODS

Certain foods either increase stomach acid or relax the esophageal sphincter, encouraging reflux. Avoid greasy foods, chocolate, mint, coffee, tea, tomato products, garlic and spicy foods.



## BANISH BUBBLES

Carbonated beverages can contribute to belching and increased stomach pressure, bringing acid into the esophagus. Choose still water over bubbly beverages.



## EAT DINNER EARLY

Plan to consume your last meal at least two hours before bedtime. Laying down after a meal can bring food from the stomach into the esophagus, causing heartburn.



## MIND THE WAISTLINE

The muscular structure that supports the lower esophageal sphincter is crucial to keep stomach acid where it belongs. Aim to reach a healthy weight, allowing your core to better support your intestinal tract.



## MANAGE MEDS

Some medications can relax your esophageal sphincter or irritate the esophagus. If you struggle with frequent heartburn, talk with your doctor about possible causes.

## Is It "Just" Heartburn?

The lower esophageal sphincter is responsible for relaxing to let food enter the stomach, then tightening to keep stomach contents from traveling back into the esophagus. Heartburn, which results when stomach acid backs up into the esophagus, is a common occasional irritant. Typically, lifestyle changes and over-the-counter medications can combat heartburn.

Occasionally, more intensive medical treatment is needed to treat GERD (Gastroesophageal Reflux Disorder), or an underlying condition may be present, such as a bacterial infection of the stomach or a hiatal hernia. Schedule an appointment with your medical provider if heartburn is experienced frequently (more than twice a week), is disruptive to your daily routine, you have difficulty swallowing, you have persistent nausea or vomiting or if you experience weight loss due to difficulty eating.

Untreated GERD and frequent heartburn can damage the esophagus and eventually lead to Barrett's Esophagus, a precancerous condition.

