

# HEARTBURN / ACID REFLUX IN PREGNANCY

Reviewed: November 2024

Heartburn, also called acid indigestion or dyspepsia, is a very common discomfort in pregnancy. The muscles of the stomach may be slower at breaking down food and the growing baby within the uterus can put pressure on the stomach, forcing food back up into your esophagus (throat). The tips below tips that may help with heartburn.



## DIET

- Eat small portions
- Chew your food well and slow down if you normally eat fast
- Watch what you eat. Keep track of which foods are triggers for you (spicy, acidic, etc.)
- Take small sips of fluid with meals, instead of a large glass
- Dairy products sometimes soothe heartburn: a glass of milk, yogurt, ice cream
- Try ginger candies, ginger ale, ginger tea, raw ginger slices
- Other foods that may help neutralize stomach acid: Almonds, fresh papaya or papaya juice, fennel tea, warm milk with honey, fresh basil leaves.

## OVER-THE-COUNTER MEDICATIONS/SUPPLEMENTS

**\*\*Remember to talk to your doctor first before starting any medications**

- Papaya enzyme supplements can be taken after meals
- Antacids (TUMS): Do not exceed 1200 mg per day. Avoid antacids with aluminum or sodium bicarbonate and take at a different time than your prenatal or iron tablets.
- Talk to your provider if H2 inhibitor medications to reduce stomach acid like Pepcid Zantac is right for you (Zantac is not recommended)

## LIFESTYLE

- Stand or sit after a meal, try not to lie down for a couple hours
- Avoid bending at the waist. Try squatting or kneeling instead
- Do not eat right before going to bed. Plan your dinners at least three hours before bedtime
- Avoid drinking liquids starting a few hours before bedtime
- Use pillows or wedges to keep your head and chest slightly elevated in bed
- Wear comfortable, loose fitting clothes
- Try chewing gum after eating. Gums stimulate salivary glands, and this can help neutralize acid
- Smoking increases stomach acid. Reduce or quit smoking
- Find some self-care practices that can help you reduce stress in your life

## LEARN MORE:

**American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Problems of the Digestive System.**  
<https://www.acog.org/womens-health/faqs/problems-of-the-digestive-system>

**Cleveland Clinic. Heartburn During Pregnancy.**  
<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/12011-heartburn-during-pregnancy>