



# Nondrug Ways to Prevent Heartburn

B-1

Nondrug Ways  
to Prevent  
Heartburn

# Notes for the Professional

## WHAT ARE YOUR HEARTBURN TRIGGERS?

Probe for possible triggers.

Possible trigger	Explain to patient
Lying down, especially within 2 to 3 hours after eating	Effect of gravity missing when lying down— reduces clearance of acid from the esophagus and increases chance for reflux episode; suggest elevating head of bed 4 to 6 inches with blocks or a foam wedge. Sleeping on the left side may also help
Bending over; tight clothing around waist	Increased intra-abdominal pressure; increased transient LES relaxation; suggest bending more slowly/wearing looser clothing and belts



## WHAT TRIGGERS YOUR HEARTBURN?

- Lying down
- Bending over
- Tight clothing

# Notes for the Professional

## WHAT ARE YOUR HEARTBURN TRIGGERS?

Probe for possible triggers.

Possible trigger	Explain to patient
Large meals	Increased acid production and prolonged gastric emptying; suggest eating smaller, more frequent meals and reducing fat intake
Smoking	Smoking inhibits saliva, relaxes the LES, increases acid production; suggest smoking cessation
Also...suggest sucking on hard candies, but not peppermints, or chewing gum to increase esophageal peristalsis and saliva production.	

Castell DO, Brunton SA, Earnest DL, et al. GERD: management algorithms for the primary care physician and the specialist. *Pract Gastroenterol.* 1998;22:18-46.

American College of Gastroenterologists. Common GI problems patient education brochures: understanding GERD. Available at: <http://www.acg.gi.org/patientinfo/gerd/info4.html>. Accessed March 26, 2000.



## WHAT TRIGGERS YOUR HEARTBURN?

- Large meals
- Smoking

# Notes for the Professional

## WHAT ARE YOUR HEARTBURN TRIGGERS?

Probe for possible triggers.

Possible trigger	Explain to patient
Medications	Some frequently prescribed medications can exacerbate symptoms; suggest drinking plenty of fluids to help wash the medication into the stomach
Exercise	Certain types of exercise can aggravate heartburn; suggest talking to trainer or fitness expert to find substitutes for these exercises. Advise patients to avoid exercising too soon after a meal
Stress/hectic lifestyle	Stress can heighten the awareness of heartburn symptoms and promote behaviors that can cause heartburn; suggest implementing routine stress-reduction techniques

Castell DO, Brunton SA, Earnest DL, et al. GERD: management algorithms for the primary care physician and the specialist. *Pract Gastroenterol.* 1998;22:18-46.

Robinson M. Gastroesophageal reflux disease: selecting optimal therapy. *Postgrad Med.* 1994;95:88-102.



## WHAT HELPS TRIGGER YOUR HEARTBURN?

- Certain medications
- Exercise
- Stress/hectic lifestyle

Ask your pharmacist to provide you with a take-home list of these helpful lifestyle modifications.

# Notes for the Professional

## FOODS THAT MAY CAUSE HEARTBURN

Review list of heartburn-causing foods/beverages.

Possible trigger	Explain to patient
High-fat foods	Delay gastric emptying; increase acid production
Chocolate, spearmint, peppermint, alcohol	Relax LES
Caffeinated beverages	Increase acid production
Carbonated beverages	Increase intra-gastric pressure
Citrus/tomato juices, garlic, raw onions, black pepper, vinegar, spicy foods	Directly irritate the esophageal mucosa



## Other Contributors to Heartburn

# FOODS/BEVERAGES THAT MAY CAUSE HEARTBURN (OR MAKE IT WORSE)

- High-fat foods
- Chocolate
- Spearmint/peppermint
- Alcoholic beverages (including wine and beer)
- Caffeinated and/or carbonated beverages
- Citrus juices, tomato juice
- Spicy foods
- Raw onions, garlic, black pepper, vinegar

# Notes for the Professional

## MEDICATIONS THAT MAY CAUSE HEARTBURN

Match a list of LES-relaxing medications with patient's current medical profile; ascertain that patient is not getting additional medications from another pharmacy.

### Medications that may cause heartburn by relaxing the LES

- Anticholinergic drugs
- Antiparkinsonian agents
- Beta-2 agonists
- Calcium channel blockers
- Diazepam



## MEDICATIONS THAT MAY CAUSE HEARTBURN

Medication	Some Common Uses
• Anticholinergic drugs	Urinary tract disorders, antihistamines, etc
• Antiparkinsonian agents	Parkinson's disease
• Beta-2 agonists	Asthma
• Calcium channel blockers	High blood pressure
• Diazepam	Anxiety disorders, seizures

# Notes for the Professional

## MEDICATIONS THAT MAY CAUSE HEARTBURN

Match a list of LES-relaxing medications with patient's current medical profile; ascertain that patient is not getting Rx or OTC medications from another pharmacy.

### Medications that may cause heartburn by relaxing the LES

- Estrogens/progesterones
- Nitrates
- Opioid analgesics
- Theophylline
- Tricyclic antidepressants

Suggest that patients drink plenty of fluids to help wash the medication into the stomach.

**PROVIDE PATIENT WITH TEAR-OFF SHEET; CHECK IDENTIFIED ITEMS.**

Castell DO, Brunton SA, Earnest DL, et al. GERD: management algorithms for the primary care physician and the specialist. *Pract Gastroenterol.* 1998;22:18-46.

Kopello KL, Kaplan B. Management of gastroesophageal reflux disease. *J Am Pharm Assoc.* 1996;NS36:16-26.

Robinson M. Gastroesophageal reflux disease: selecting optimal therapy. *Postgrad Med.* 1994;95:88-102.



# MEDICATIONS THAT MAY CAUSE HEARTBURN

Medication	Some Common Uses
• Estrogens/progesterones	Birth control pills, hormone therapies
• Nitrates	Angina
• Opioid analgesics	Prescription pain killers
• Theophylline	Asthma
• Tricyclic antidepressants	Psychotherapeutic agents



**CHECK YOUR MAIL FOR HELPFUL NEW ISSUES OF THE  
A.C.T. AGAINST ACID  
SERIES COMING SOON.**

To check results of a recent nationwide survey about heartburn,  
visit the National Heartburn Alliance (NHBA) Web site at  
[www.heartburnalliance.org](http://www.heartburnalliance.org).

