



Common Concerns During Pregnancy: Heartburn and Indigestion

EXTENSION

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Heartburn and indigestion feel like a burning feeling at the top of your stomach. Heartburn does not actually involve the heart; it happens when food mixed with stomach acid is pushed upwards from the stomach into to the esophagus. Pregnancy slows down digestion so food stays in the stomach longer. As your baby gets bigger, he or she pushes on the stomach making heartburn more common during the last months of pregnancy.

Symptoms of heartburn

- Burning feeling in your chest
- Heavy feeling in your stomach
- Burping
- Feeling sick
- Vomiting
- Pain that worsens after lying down
- Bitter or acid taste in mouth
- A few causes of heartburn
- Eating large meals
- Eating foods high in fat
- Eating chocolate or peppermint
- Drinking caffeine beverages
- Feeling anxiety
- Exercising after eating

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are also available on our website at:
extension.okstate.edu

Tips to decrease heartburn

- Eat 5 or 6 small meals instead of 3 big meals.
- Eat slowly and completely chew all your food.
- Avoid too much greasy, fried or spicy foods.
- Eat less citrus fruits or juice if they cause heartburn.
- Eat your last meal at least 2 or 3 hours before you lay down for bed.
- Sleep with head slightly elevated.
- Drink less tea, coffee and carbonated drinks like soda.
- Drink liquids between meals instead of with meals.
- Wear comfortable, loose-fitting clothes. Tight clothes can press on your stomach and cause food to go back up in your food pipe.
- Gain the amount of weight recommended by your doctor. Excess weight may increase heartburn.
- Try chewing gum after eating. It creates moisture in your mouth that helps fight the acid in your stomach.
- Bend your knees instead of using your waist when you pick something up. It will take pressure off of your stomach.

When to call the doctor

Check with your doctor before taking any over-the-counter antacid medicines for heartburn. If your doctor prescribes medicine and the heartburn symptoms don't go away, it may be a sign of something more serious. If the heartburn medicine prescribed by your doctor does not work, be sure to let your doctor know right away.

The Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service

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The Cooperative Extension Service is the largest, most successful informal educational organization in the world. It is a nationwide system funded and guided by a partnership of federal, state, and local governments that delivers information to help people help themselves through the land-grant university system.

Extension carries out programs in the broad categories of agriculture, natural resources and environment; family and consumer sciences; 4-H and other youth; and community resource development. Extension staff members live and work among the people they serve to help stimulate and educate Americans to plan ahead and cope with their problems.

Some characteristics of the Cooperative Extension system are:

- The federal, state, and local governments cooperatively share in its financial support and program direction.
- It is administered by the land-grant university as designated by the state legislature through an Extension director.
- Extension programs are nonpolitical, objective, and research-based information.
- It provides practical, problem-oriented education for people of all ages. It is designated to take the knowledge of the university to those persons who do not or cannot participate in the formal classroom instruction of the university.
- It utilizes research from university, government, and other sources to help people make their own decisions.
- More than a million volunteers help multiply the impact of the Extension professional staff.
- It dispenses no funds to the public.
- It is not a regulatory agency, but it does inform people of regulations and of their options in meeting them.
- Local programs are developed and carried out in full recognition of national problems and goals.
- The Extension staff educates people through personal contacts, meetings, demonstrations, and the mass media.
- Extension has the built-in flexibility to adjust its programs and subject matter to meet new needs. Activities shift from year to year as citizen groups and Extension workers close to the problems advise changes.

References

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