

Preventing and Treating Heartburn

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The name of heartburn is misleading, as the causes and symptoms have nothing to do with the heart itself. Heartburn is the response of the body to an over abundance of acid in the stomach. The symptoms of heart burn are a burning sensation in the stomach and a caustic or bitter taste in the mouth.

The association between certain types of food and heartburn cannot be denied and the situation can be worsened if the heartburn sufferer chooses to lie down. Other things that can cause heartburn to worsen are citrus fruits, tomatoes, spicy foods, and certain medications, such as ibuprofen or aspirin. It is best to avoid using these to prevent heartburn or making an existing heart attack worse. Pregnant women may suffer from heartburn more frequently than they normally would, but the situation should return to normal after the pregnancy ends.

Because heartburn is caused by an excess amount of stomach acid, the easiest way to treat is to ingest an antacid or a alkaline food that will neutralize the excess acid. (Tums is one such remedy, but ingesting a small amount of baking soda will also serve the purpose.) The severity of the symptoms can be lessened simply by not laying down. This is one reason why heart burn is more frequently experienced at night and in the morning.

If heartburn only occurs once in a while it is nothing to worry about and can be cured easily with Tums or any other antacid. Frequent heartburn can be a sign or a more serious problem and it can damage the lining of the esophagus and the throat. The goal of the treatment of acid reflux as the same as it is for heartburn, to reduce excess stomach acid, but a longer term approach needs to be taken.

A doctor can determine with the frequent heartburn is caused by acid reflux or some other condition that may require a different treatment, but if it is acid reflux, Zantac and Prilosec are both effective treatments, although they must be taken in the morning before any food is consumed for the day.

As long as the heart burn isn't frequent, a heart burn sufferer has nothing to worry about, although he may want to be more careful about what he puts into his body in the future. Paying attention to what foods causes it can help prevent a future outbreak.