



## Self-care Information

# Heartburn & Indigestion

Tips on how you can self manage heartburn & indigestion in adults

“Supporting you to look after you”

### Key advice:

- Avoid food and drink that triggers your symptoms (usually spicy, fatty or acidic foods).
- Try to raise the head of your bed 10cm to 20cm using bricks or wood.
- If you are overweight, try losing weight.
- Try not to eat close to bedtime.
- Ibuprofen and aspirin may make the problem worse, try to use an alternative painkiller if needed. If you are prescribed aspirin, do not stop taking it without speaking to your GP first.
- Antacids can help with the burning feeling.

**Indigestion** is a general term for pain or discomfort felt in the stomach and under the ribs. You may also feel bloated, and burp or pass wind more.

**Heartburn** is when acid moves up from the stomach and causes a burning pain behind your breastbone. Symptoms can often be worse after eating, when lying down, or when bending over.

Indigestion and heartburn can occur together or on their own. It's a common problem that affects most people at some point.

## What causes heartburn & indigestion?

There are a few possible causes, such as:

- Certain foods or drinks (usually spicy, fatty or acidic foods).
- Being overweight.
- Smoking.
- Pregnancy.
- Stress or anxiety.
- Some medicines (such as ibuprofen).

### Did you know?

You can buy cheaper non-branded alternatives of heartburn and indigestion remedies from a pharmacy or local supermarket

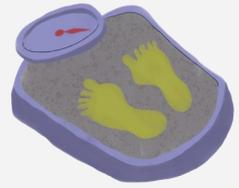


**Let your pharmacist know if you take any other medicines, or if you are pregnant or breastfeeding, as this may affect which treatments you can use safely.**

## How can I treat the problem?

### You could try

- ✓ Raising the head of your bed 10cm to 20cm using bricks or wood to help at night.
- ✓ Losing weight, if you are overweight.
- ✓ Finding ways to relax if stress or anxiety are a trigger.
- ✓ Taking an antacid—your local pharmacist can advise you on what you can buy if you are unsure.



### Try not to

- ✗ Eat fatty or spicy foods.
- ✗ Eat anything in the 3 to 4 hours before bedtime.
- ✗ Drink too much alcohol.
- ✗ Smoke.
- ✗ Take ibuprofen or aspirin—this can make indigestion worse. **If you are prescribed aspirin, do not stop taking it without speaking to your GP first.**



### See your GP or call 111 if:

- Making lifestyle changes is not helping.
- You keep getting indigestion.
- You have severe pain.
- You have unexplained weight loss.
- You are being sick.
- You feel like you have difficulty swallowing.
- You have blood in your vomit or poo.
- You feel like you have a lump or swelling of your stomach.

### Here are some useful links to further information

NHS Website	<a href="https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heartburn-and-acid-reflux/">https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/heartburn-and-acid-reflux/</a> <a href="https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/indigestion/">https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/indigestion/</a>
Patient Websites	<a href="https://patient.info/digestive-health/acid-reflux-and-oesophagitis">https://patient.info/digestive-health/acid-reflux-and-oesophagitis</a>
Or visit your local pharmacy for advice	

