



Sacopee Valley Birthing Services

www.sacopeemidwives.org

Serving women in southern Maine and eastern New Hampshire.

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Heartburn can affect all of us, young, old, pregnant or not, and it is never fun. During pregnancy there is an increase in one's change of developing heartburn, even if you have never felt it in the past. Below you will find an explanation of why heartburn happens and ways to avoid/treat it.

Too much stomach acid and too little stomach acid have the same symptoms. Consistent use of antacids favors yeast growth, bad bacteria in the stomach, and inflammation.

The softening hormones of pregnancy allow stomach acids to rise through the tight sphincter muscle at the top of the stomach into the esophagus.

Here are some suggestions that may help.

Do not drink cold beverages including water with your meals, because cold beverages will destroy your natural digestive enzymes. Soda and other drinks with carbon dioxide and cause stomach distention, which can put pressure upwards.

Instead drink a very small cup of warm to hot water. This will actually increase enzymatic activity. Drink most of your water in between meals.

Peppermint tea is not beneficial although licorice, ginger root, turmeric and chamomile can help.

Coffee can relax the esophageal sphincter, which can lead to reflux.

Drinking a teaspoon of organic apple cider vinegar may be very beneficial if low acidity is a problem for you. If this does not help you then your problem is not low acidity, but is more likely a lack of sufficient digestive enzymes.

Chew your food until it is nearly liquid in the mouth. Chewing activates your natural enzymes, and makes digestion easier on the body.

Nuts may increase heartburn, because they are a natural enzyme inhibitor. Soaking nuts in water or toasting them in the oven will destroy the natural enzyme inhibitors. 8-10 Blanched almonds chewed well can help.

Eat fruits and vegetables with every meal. They contain natural digestive enzymes.

Plain brown rice with a bit of manuka honey is soothing.

Apples cool the burn of stomach acid. Eat them fresh, with the skin still on, or cook them for desserts. Apple honey is a simple remedy that will neutralize stomach acids. Peel, core, and slice several sweet apples. Simmer with a little water over low heat for three hours until the mixture is thick, brown, and sweet to the taste. Refrigerate in an airtight container and take a few spoonfuls whenever you have the need.

Buttermilk is an acid-reliever, but don't confuse it with regular milk, which can be an acid-maker, especially if you are bothered by lactose intolerance.

Cabbage is a natural fire extinguisher for stomach burn. For the best relief, put the cabbage through a juicer, then drink it.

Skip juices from citrus fruits, but try stomach-cooling juices for heartburn relief: papaya, mango, guava, pear.

You can eat Papaya straight to reap the benefit of its natural, indigestion-fighting enzyme papain. Or drink 1-cup papaya juice combined with 1-teaspoon sugar and 2 pinches cardamom to relieve acid.

Supplementing with plant digestive enzymes (papaya enzymes) at every meal may prove to be extremely beneficial.

All hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils will destroy enzymes, and make meals very difficult to digest. Virgin Coconut oil is a far superior cooking oil. You also may use olive oil, flax oil, or peanut oil.

Stay away from greasy foods, deep-fried anything and too much red meat, especially pork. In the US most all fried foods are fried in hydrogenated oils.

Do not eat too much at one meal.

Do not eat too late at night

Keep your head elevated when you sleep

Sucking on hard candy or other means of producing more saliva (such as chewing gum) can also be helpful.

If all else fails... Giving Birth will solve the heartburn!