

# Heartburn in Pregnancy

Heartburn is a common problem during pregnancy, especially in the second and third trimester.

## What causes heartburn?

Heartburn is caused by a back-up of stomach acid into the esophagus. When stomach acid comes into contact with the walls of the esophagus, it often causes a "burning" feeling.

## How can I prevent or treat heartburn?

### 1. Eat Small Meals

- Eat small amounts several times during the day. This may mean you are eating every 2 to 3 hours. Avoid eating large amounts at a time.
- Eat slowly and chew your food well.

### 2. Eat Grains or Milk

- Some women find that eating grains or starches at each meal prevents heartburn. Bread, pasta, rice and cereal are examples of grains.
- Some women find that drinking milk prevents heartburn.

### 3. Avoid Drinking at Meals

- Separate your drinks from your meals.

### 4. Sit Upright During Meals and 1 hour After Eating

- Avoid lying down after meals.

### 5. Raise the Head of Your Bed

- Use 2 to 3 pillows to keep your head and esophagus higher than your stomach when you are sleeping.

### 6. Wear Loose Fitting Clothes

- Avoid clothing that is tight across your stomach.

### 7. Limit or Avoid Foods that may Trigger Heartburn

- Foods that may trigger heartburn include:
  - Spicy foods, onion, garlic or other strong flavours
  - Alcohol, juice and soft drinks
  - Foods or drinks with caffeine such as chocolate, coffee, tea
  - Fatty foods and oils.

### 4. Talk to Your Doctor

- If your heartburn continues, talk to your doctor.
- Don't take over-the-counter medications without talking to your doctor.