HEARTBURN

ONU HEALTHWISE

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WHAT IS HEARTBURN?
Heartburn results when the lower esophageal sphincter (LES) doesn’t tighten properly or is too relaxed, causing stomach acid to escape from the stomach and enter the esophagus. This creates a burning discomfort in the upper abdomen or below the breast bone.

WHAT CAUSES HEARTBURN?
- Food
- Caffeine
- Alcohol
- Smoking
- Obesity
- Pregnancy
- Stress

WHAT FOODS TRIGGER HEARTBURN?
- Chocolate
- Mint
- Garlic
- Nuts
- Fatty Foods
  - ex. French fries, Hamburger
- Spicy Foods
  - ex. Wings, Salsa, Chili
- Tomato
  - ex. Ketchup, Pizza sauce
- Citrus Fruits

HOW DO YOU MANAGE HEARTBURN?
- Avoid foods and drinks that trigger heartburn
- Eat smaller meals and avoid eating 3-4 hours before bedtime
- Drink plenty of water throughout the day
- Avoid tight fitting clothing
- Sleep with head slightly elevated
- Avoid smoking
- Try to manage stress in a healthy way such as running or yoga

WHAT OTC MEDICATIONS CAN MANAGE HEARTBURN?
Antacids (Tums, Maalox): Quick short term relief when experiencing heartburn symptoms
H2 Antagonists (Zantac, Pepcid): Short term relief; take medication 20 minutes before eating large meal with trigger foods to prevent onset of heartburn
Proton Pump Inhibitors (Prilosec, Prevacid): 14 day treatment for recurrent heartburn (talk to doctor or pharmacist before initiation to assure no interactions with other medications)

If heartburn episodes are frequent or do not improve with self-care within two weeks, contact a physician for further work-up. If chest pain is associated with shortness of breath or pain radiates to the neck or arm, seek medical help immediately.

http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/
http://www.gastro.org/patient-center/digestive-conditions/heartburn-gerd