

Pregnancy Heartburn?

7 Ways to Get Relief

To help ease your pain, here are some answers to your “burning” questions. (Pardon the pun.)

How do I treat heartburn during pregnancy?

When you’re growing a human being, you don’t have time for that yucky acid reflux. But, your usual go-to methods for treating it may not be safe for your unborn baby. (Remember Pepto Bismol? That’s on the No Fly List for moms-to-be, according to FDA recommendations.)

Instead, here are some of the safest and best ways to get rid of heartburn when you’re pregnant:

1. **Dip into some yogurt.** Its probiotics and soothing texture make yogurt a great option for extinguishing heartburn – or at least dousing the flames a little.
2. **Drink milk with honey.** According to the American Pregnancy Association, a tablespoon of honey mixed in a glass of warm milk may be just what you need to neutralize heartburn-causing acid.
3. **Snack on almonds.** Munching on a handful of almonds may provide heartburn relief since these nuts have a lower acidity level than others.
4. **Eat pineapple or papaya.** For some women, the digestive enzymes in pineapple and papaya have helped ease symptoms. Eating these fruits after your meals can aid digestion and reduce your chances of heartburn.
5. **Try a little ginger.** You probably knew ginger was a good remedy for an upset stomach. Well, that makes it a helpful candidate for fighting off heartburn, too. Among ginger’s many benefits, it can reduce inflammation and prevent stomach acid from traveling up the esophagus.
6. **Chew sugar-free gum.** Another effective method for taming the burn is to chew some sugar-free gum. One study found that chewing sugar-free gum for 30 minutes after a meal can reduce acid reflux.
7. **Take (doctor-approved) medication.** When all else fails, certain medications are considered safe to use for pregnancy heartburn relief. Just make sure you speak to your doctor or OB-GYN first. If your heartburn is severe, they may prescribe special medication to help control it.

While not every tip mentioned above may work to ease your symptoms, you’ve got nine months to try them all and figure out what works.

What medications can I take for heartburn during pregnancy?

It’s important to be extremely careful about the medications you take when pregnant.

For heartburn relief, over-the-counter antacids (such as Tums, Mylanta, Rolaids) are all considered safe medications to use during pregnancy.

If you experience any unusual symptoms while taking an over-the-counter medication, call your provider immediately.

How can I prevent heartburn during pregnancy?

They say prevention is the best medicine, so knowing common heartburn triggers can help you keep the acid at bay.

Of course, pregnancy itself is a major trigger for heartburn. As your growing uterus puts pressure on your stomach, this pushes stomach acid up your throat.

Those lovely hormones are no help either. They tend to relax the valve between your stomach and esophagus, which makes it easier for acid to make its way upward.

While there's nothing you can do to stop this entirely, there are a few things that can help prevent heartburn from flaring up during pregnancy:

- **Avoid lying down after eating.** It may be tempting to take a post-meal nap, but if you want to prevent heartburn, don't lie down after eating. Consider napping in an upright recliner instead.
- **Prop yourself up at night.** It's hard enough to sleep well while pregnant without throwing acid reflux on top of everything. To prevent nighttime heartburn, try propping yourself up when you go to sleep to counteract the acid.
- **Don't eat before bedtime.** In addition to propping yourself up at night, try not to eat anything within three hours of hitting the sack.
- **Skip spicy, acidic, or fried foods.** Ask yourself: Are those greasy chips worth being doubled over in pain later? (Probably not.) If you want to avoid the risk, steer clear of any and all rich, fatty foods. Not only will this help prevent heartburn, but making more nutritious choices helps ensure that you your baby is getting the important vitamins and minerals that they need to stay healthy in utero.
- **Eat small meals, but more frequently.** Your pregnant tummy doesn't love to be hit with large amounts of food to digest in one go. Make things easier on your gut by eating several small meals throughout the day instead of three large ones.
- **Eat slowly.** Wolfing down those small meals will defeat the purpose of spreading them out. Eating quickly increases the risk of acid reflux, so slow down and enjoy your food.
- **Wear loose clothing.** Tight-fitting clothes are not your stomach's best friend when you're trying to prevent heartburn – particularly during pregnancy. Wear clothing that offers support without being restrictive.
- **Drink your liquids between meals.** If you're the type of person who likes to take a swig of their drink between each bite, it's time to change course. Drinking liquids during meals can exacerbate heartburn symptoms, so take little sips if you're thirsty at mealtime.

When can I expect heartburn to end?

Someday, scientists may very well invent a miracle medication that promises permanent pregnancy heartburn relief. Unfortunately, that hasn't happened yet.

So, if you're wondering how long you can expect to deal with heartburn while you're pregnant, it will probably be throughout your entire pregnancy. (Now may be a good time to remind yourself that you get a cute little baby out of this when you're done.)

However, just because there's no cure, that doesn't mean you can't find some relief in the meantime.