

Avoiding the burn



Are you sick of laying in bed at night with the constant pain of heartburn? It is a very common problem affecting a large percentage of pregnant women, which can be controlled with some small changes. Hormonal changes during pregnancy cause relaxation of the ligaments which normally keep the valve between the esophagus and the stomach closed. If it relaxes it can allow the passage of stomach contents to move back up the esophagus, causing 'heartburn' or reflux. The key to managing heartburn is to avoid the triggers which cause it.

The most common foods which tend to trigger heartburn are:

- Tomato based foods
- Vinegar
- Mustard
- Chocolate
- Citrus fruits and juices
- Highly spiced foods
- Fatty fried foods.

You may also find it helpful to eat smaller quantities of food but at greater frequency. If you find that lying flat (ie in bed) triggers heartburn, you can try sleeping up on a pillow, or even investing in a body pillow, which may allow you to be more comfortable. If avoiding food triggers fails to reduce the heartburn, there are some medications which can be used safely during pregnancy. Always ask your doctor, midwife or pharmacist about any medications before you take them. Make sure that they know you are pregnant.

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