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Controlling Heartburn

These recommendations may not apply to all individuals. Patients should keep a diary to help them better manage their symptoms. The listed items are common contributors but do not need to be changed unless proven to worsen symptoms in an individual. Discuss any concerns with your physician.

- * Avoid food, beverages and medicines that affect the lower esophageal sphincter muscle action or irritate the lining of the esophagus, such as:
 - * Fried or fatty foods.
 - * Chocolate.
 - * Peppermint.
 - * Alcohol.
 - * Coffee (decaf too).
 - * Carbonated beverages.
 - * Ketchup and mustard.
 - * Vinegar.
 - * Tomato sauce.
 - * Citrus fruits or juices.
 - * Aspirin, anti-inflammatory and pain medications other than acetaminophen.
- * Decrease the size of portions at mealtimes. Don't overeat!
- * Eat meals two to three hours before lying down.
- * Elevate the head of the bed four to six inches using blocks or telephone books.
- * If you are overweight, lose weight.
- * Avoid situations that can increase the pressure on the abdomen, as they will cause more reflux. Try simple things like avoiding tight clothing or control top hosiery and body shapers. Less obvious causes include sit-ups, leg-lifts or abdominal crunches.
- * Stop smoking, as cigarettes decrease the ability of the lower esophageal sphincter muscle to work properly.