

## **SORT FACT FROM FICTION**

There are lots of myths and misconceptions around heartburn and reflux. Read on, you may be surprised!

### **FICTION 'My heartburn is caused by the foods I eat'**

**FACT** While it is true that some of the foods you eat may aggravate your heartburn symptoms, many people have heartburn no matter what they eat. This is because the underlying cause of heartburn for these individuals is a medical problem, GORD (gastro-oesophageal reflux disease). GORD is a chronic condition that can be treated.



### **FICTION 'Heartburn is just a minor, trivial complaint. I should just live with it'**

**FACT** Heartburn is common, but it is not trivial. In fact, frequent heartburn can have a very negative effect on your quality of life. Persistent heartburn may be a symptom of GORD (gastro-oesophageal reflux disease) and if left untreated may cause or contribute to other medical problems. A proper diagnosis and effective management by your doctor can avoid these complications.



### **FICTION 'Antacids I get from the pharmacy or supermarket are the best option'**

**FACT** These medicines are only intended to relieve occasional heartburn. If you experience heartburn or other reflux symptoms more than twice a week, you should talk to your doctor.

## **SORT FACT FROM FICTION**

### **FICTION 'If I take medication to reduce stomach acid, I won't be able to digest my food'**

**FACT** Even if you are taking a medicine that reduces the amount of acid produced in your stomach, you will still produce enough acid to allow normal digestion of food. The acid works together with other substances in your stomach, called enzymes, to break down food. Medications that reduce acid production do not reduce the production of these digestive enzymes.



### **FICTION 'I can stop taking my heartburn medication when I'm feeling better'**

**FACT** Some people may not need to take medication every day. However, for many individuals who have GORD, stopping treatment will lead to the return of troublesome symptoms. It's important to talk to your doctor before making any changes to the way you take your medication.



For more information, lifestyle and dietary tips,  
talk to your doctor or visit

**heartburn.com.au**



AstraZeneca Pty Ltd. ABN 54 009 682 311. Alma Road, North Ryde NSW 2113.  
Reference. Digestive Health Foundation. Gastroenterological Society of Australia.  
Gastro-oesophageal reflux disease in adults. Guidelines for clinicians. 4th edition, 2008.  
02/10 NEX000005g AST2055/CJB AZAE0212

## **LEARN ABOUT THE BURN**

# **Reflux, Heartburn and GORD**

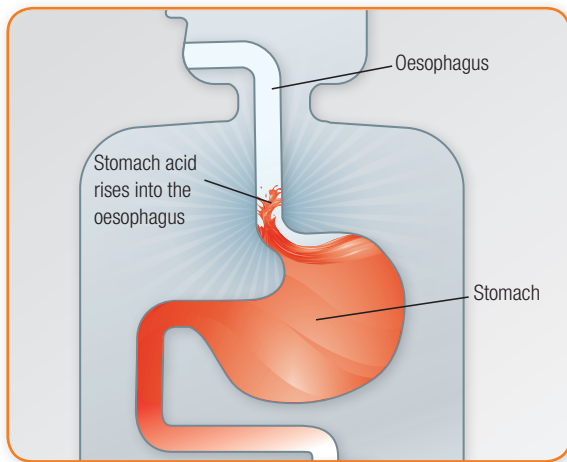


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GORD = gastro-oesophageal reflux disease

## WHAT IS REFLUX?

Reflux occurs when the acid in your stomach, which is there to help you digest your food, rises up into your oesophagus (the tube that connects your mouth to your stomach). Your stomach has a thick mucous lining that protects it from the acids inside, but your oesophagus doesn't have this protection, so when it is exposed to acid it may become irritated and painful leading to the symptoms of heartburn.



## WHAT IS HEARTBURN?

Heartburn is a burning sensation that rises from your stomach or lower chest up towards your throat. Heartburn is the most common symptom of reflux and GORD (gastro-oesophageal reflux disease) and is very common – up to 1 in 5 adults experience heartburn at least once a week.

## WHAT IS GORD?

If you experience heartburn or other symptoms of reflux more than twice a week, or if your heartburn interferes with your daily life, you may have the medical condition, GORD (gastro-oesophageal reflux disease) – a chronic and relapsing disease. If left untreated, GORD can also

lead to other medical problems. Fortunately many of these problems can be avoided with proper monitoring and treatment.

## ARE GORD AND HEARTBURN THE SAME?

If you experience occasional heartburn you do not necessarily have GORD (gastro-oesophageal reflux disease), but when heartburn symptoms occur frequently and become troublesome they may be an indication of GORD. You need to see a doctor to be sure what's going on. Both GORD and heartburn can have a big impact on your day-to-day life. You may find yourself avoiding certain foods, activities, or even social situations because of your symptoms. For some people, heartburn is their only symptom of GORD, but others may experience a range of symptoms.

**OTHER SYMPTOMS OF GORD INCLUDE:** excessive burping; regurgitation; sudden filling of the mouth with saliva; difficulty swallowing; sore throat; persistent dry cough; chest pain (if you are experiencing chest pain, contact your doctor immediately).

**Do you suffer from any of these symptoms on two or more days a week? Why not talk it over with your doctor?**

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

GORD (gastro-oesophageal reflux disease) and heartburn can be treated with medications to neutralise or reduce the amount of acid in your stomach. This reduces the discomfort caused by refluxed stomach acid and enables the lining of your oesophagus to heal. There are also some dietary and lifestyle changes that may help to reduce your symptoms.

## SHOULD YOU SEE YOUR DOCTOR?

### TRY THIS REFLUX REVIEW

Do you suffer from heartburn or reflux on two or more days a week?

Yes  No

Do you suffer from heartburn or reflux even though you take medication for it?

Yes  No

Does your heartburn or reflux interfere with your daily activities?

Yes  No

Does it interfere with your sleep?

Yes  No

If you answered YES to any of these questions, you should consider seeing your doctor for advice. Take this checklist with you.

## ALREADY TAKING MEDICATION?

If you still suffer from symptoms even though you are taking a medication, it could be that you are not taking the most effective treatment. Only your doctor can advise you on the full range of treatments and recommend the most suitable one for you.

For more information, lifestyle and dietary tips, talk to your doctor or visit

[heartburn.com.au](http://heartburn.com.au)