



## Heartburn and Indigestion

Heartburn, indigestion and acid regurgitation commonly occur in later pregnancy when the hormone, progesterone, relaxes the valve at the top of your stomach, causing a small amount of stomach acid, sometimes with partially digested food, to surge upwards into your oesophagus (gullet). This causes a burning discomfort in the upper middle section of your chest. Early pregnancy sickness is often accompanied by heartburn, or conversely, the heartburn and indigestion can make you feel nauseous.

### Tips for coping with heartburn and indigestion

- Prescribed antacid medicine may combat the acid reflux but excessive use may interfere with your body's ability to absorb other minerals from your food.
- At night, use several pillows to prop yourself up so that the valve at the stomach is not under pressure.
- Avoid foods which aggravate the symptoms, including rich, spicy, fried and greasy foods, tea, coffee, alcohol, sugar and additives in processed foods.
- Eat small frequent meals to prevent your stomach from becoming overfull, which puts an upwards pressure on the stomach valve.
- Eat raw garlic each day, or taking a good quality garlic capsule may relieve the intensity of the symptoms – make sure you buy capsules which are rich in allicin, the active ingredient.
- Herbal remedies include ginger, camomile or dandelion root tea, and slippery elm tablets can be helpful. However, you should avoid dandelion if you are diabetic (including pregnancy diabetes) or on medication for high blood pressure
- Aromatherapy essential oils of lemon, orange or neroli (orange blossom), 4 drops in total combined with one drop of black pepper in a teaspoonful of grapeseed carrier oil, can be added to your bath water.
- Other complementary therapies which may help include acupuncture, reflexology, Alexander technique, osteopathy or chiropractic

## Some homeopathic remedies which may be useful for heartburn and indigestion

### Try NUX VOMICA if you

- have reflux which is bitter & sour, or has a herb-like taste
- have a metallic taste in your mouth
- feel bloated & heavy with cramping pain or soreness in your stomach
- feel worse after eating & if you wear tight clothing
- feel better if you have hot drinks
- are irritable, sensitive and quarrelsome

### Try PULSATILLA if you

- have reflux which is bitter, sour & tastes of food just eaten
- have reflux which leaves a slimy or salty taste in your mouth
- have an empty feeling in your stomach with rumbling and gurgling in the evening
- feel worse in the evening & after eating rich fatty food, bread, milk, fruit or meat
- feel emotional, tearful & need sympathy

### Try NATRUM MUR if you

- have reflux which is watery & tastes sweet or of food
- have a cramping pressure in your tummy
- feel worse after eating starchy foods
- feel better if you don't eat
- keep your emotions to yourself, often crying alone

### Try CAUSTICUM if you

- have reflux which tastes fatty, greasy or of food
- have a feeling of fullness in your stomach
- feel worse if you walk, get wet or cold & in the evening
- feel better if you have warm drinks, keep wrapped up, especially in bed
- cry a lot & despair that you will ever get better

Always inform your midwife if you are using any natural remedies or receiving treatment from a complementary therapist

For more individualised advice on coping with heartburn and indigestion, call Expectancy on **0906 400 6227** (calls charged at £1.50 per minute, from a BT landline; calls from mobiles and other networks may vary)