



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

Burning pain in the chest and upper abdomen during pregnancy.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- Burning pain in the center of the chest and upper abdomen, frequently accompanied by an unpleasant taste in the mouth.
- Belching.

CAUSES

Heartburn is not associated with a heart disorder. It is caused by a backflow of acid from the stomach into the esophagus. The muscles that close off the upper stomach become lax, allowing stomach juices to enter the esophagus and irritate its lining. During late pregnancy, the enlarged womb presses on the stomach and causes this condition.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- Overeating or eating before lying down.
- Smoking.
- Excess alcohol consumption.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

Avoid risk factors listed above.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

This is an uncomfortable but harmless condition. It disappears after the baby is born unless its cause is not related to pregnancy.

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

Inflammation and ulcer in the lower esophagus (rare).



TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- Avoid stooping, especially after eating.
- Don't wear tight girdles or belts.
- Place books or blocks under the head of your bed to raise it about 4 inches.
- Don't smoke.

MEDICATIONS

Medicine usually is not necessary for this disorder. Avoid all medicines while pregnant, if possible. As long as you can live with the symptoms, endure the discomfort without drugs or medicines.

ACTIVITY

Stay active. Avoid abdominal exercises that require bending.

DIET

- Eat small, frequent meals.
- Don't eat before bedtime.
- Avoid highly seasoned food.
- Don't drink alcohol.
- Avoid very hot or very cold beverages.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of heartburn during pregnancy. This should be diagnosed.
- The following occur after diagnosis:
 - Simple measures don't bring relief.
 - You begin vomiting late in pregnancy.
 - You vomit material that has blood in it or looks like coffee grounds.
 - You have black or tarry stools.