



**University  
Hospitals Sussex**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Management of acid reflux, oesophagitis, heartburn and hiatus hernia

Patient information

## Acid reflux

Acid reflux occurs when the digestive juices rise into the oesophagus (gullet) from the stomach.

## Heartburn

Heartburn is a burning discomfort felt behind the breastbone, often rising from the stomach to the throat. When this happens a lot, the oesophagus becomes inflamed, this is called oesophagitis.

## Hiatus hernia

A hiatus hernia occurs when part of the stomach rises through the hole (hiatus) in the diaphragm through which the oesophagus (gullet) passes.

**Sometimes altering how and what you eat can help.**

**Foods most commonly linked with acid reflux and heartburn include:**

- Fried foods
- Smoked and salted fish
- Highly seasoned and spicy dishes, e.g. chilli con carne, curry, soups like Mulligatawny or oxtail
- Vegetables – garlic, onion and peppers
- Pickles, vinegar, mustard, pepper, spices

- Skins, pips and seeds of fruit
- Dried fruit and nuts
- Strong cheese, cooked 'stringy' cheese
- Tough and strongly flavoured meats and sausages
- Strong tea or coffee - especially 'stewed' varieties
- Alcohol

## **Dietary advice to relieve symptoms**

- Eat small frequent meals
- Do not miss meals or go for long periods without food
- Eat slowly and chew your food well
- Sit (upright) at the table when eating
- Take drinks after meals rather than with them
- Avoid eating or drinking late at night
- Avoid eating foods of extreme temperature, hot or cold
- Avoid eating foods which you know cause you symptoms
- Lose weight if you are overweight - ask your doctor or practice nurse for advice.

**Talk to your dietitian to make sure your diet is nutritionally adequate if you are avoiding certain foods for long periods.**

## Contact us

For further information or to provide feedback

### St Richard's Hospital

Telephone: **01243 831498**

Email: **[uhsussex.chichesterdietitians@nhs.net](mailto:uhsussex.chichesterdietitians@nhs.net)**

### Worthing & Southlands Hospital

Telephone: **01903 286779**

Email: **[worthing.dietitians@nhs.net](mailto:worthing.dietitians@nhs.net)**

St Richard's Hospital  
Spitalfield Lane  
Chichester, West Sussex  
PO19 6SE

Southlands Hospital  
Upper Shoreham Road  
Shoreham-by-Sea  
West Sussex  
BN43 6QT

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Reference no. 2194  
Department: Dietetics  
Issue date: 03/23  
Review date: 03/26  
Author: University Hospital Sussex Bariatric Dietitians  
Version: 2

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