



CITY OF MISSION HEALTH TRAINING SERIES

Topic: **HEARTBURN AWARENESS**

Date: **Thursday, January 20, 2011**

Time: **3:00pm—4:00pm**

Location: **City Hall - Council Chambers**

Speaker: **Dr. Ahsan Khizar, Gastroenterologist**



Definition

Heartburn is a burning sensation in your chest, just behind your breastbone. Heartburn pain is often worse when lying down or bending over. Occasional heartburn is common and no cause for alarm. Most people can manage the discomfort of heartburn on their own with lifestyle changes and over-the-counter medications. More frequent heartburn that interferes with your daily routine may be a symptom of something more serious that requires help from a doctor.

Symptoms

- A burning pain in the chest that usually occurs after eating and may occur at night
- Pain that worsens when lying down or bending over

When to see a doctor

- Seek immediate help if you experience severe chest pain, especially when combined with other signs and symptoms such as difficulty breathing or jaw or arm pain. Chest pain may be a symptom of a heart attack.
- If heartburn occurs more than twice a week
- If the symptoms persist despite use of over-the-counter medications
- If you have difficulty swallowing

Causes

Heartburn occurs when stomach acid backs up into your esophagus. Normally when you swallow, your lower esophageal sphincter—a circular band of muscle around the bottom part of your esophagus—relaxes to allow food and liquid to flow down into your stomach. Then it closes again. However, if the lower esophageal sphincter relaxes abnormally or weakens, stomach acid can flow back up into your esophagus, causing heartburn. The acid backup is worse when you're bent over or lying down.

Risk Factors

Certain foods and drinks can trigger heartburn in some people, including:

- ♥ Alcohol, Coffee, Orange Juice, Soft Drinks, Fatty food, Fried food
- ♥ Black Pepper, Ketchup, Mustard, Tomato Sauce, Vinegar, Chocolate, Peppermint

Treatment and Drugs

Many over-the-counter medications are available to relieve the pain of heartburn.

- ♥ Antacids that neutralize stomach acid. Antacids, such as Maalox, Mylanta, Gelusil, Rolaids and Tums may provide quick relief
- ♥ Read and follow the instructions on over-the-counter medications. If you find over-the-counter treatments don't work or you rely on them often, make an appointment with your doctor.

Lifestyle and Home Remedies

- ♥ **Maintain a healthy weight.** Excess pounds put pressure on your abdomen, pushing your stomach and causing acid to back up into your esophagus.
- ♥ **Avoid tight fitting clothes.** Clothes that fit tightly around your waist put pressure on your abdomen and the lower esophageal sphincter.
- ♥ **Avoid foods and drinks that trigger heartburn.** Everyone has specific triggers, such as alcohol or tomato sauce.
- ♥ **Eat smaller meals.** Avoid overeating by eating smaller meals.
- ♥ **Delay lying down after a meal and elevate the head of your bed.** Wait at least two to three hours after eating before lying down.
- ♥ **Stop smoking.** Smoking decreases the lower esophageal sphincter's ability to function properly.

The Human Resources Department Employee Benefits Division in conjunction with Mission Regional Medical Center will be hosting health training seminars each month. Employees will receive health tips to take home and a plan for taking better care of themselves.

Our mission is to promote health awareness and to encourage healthy lifestyles.