



## Heartburn information

Heartburn is very common in pregnancy, affecting as many as half of all pregnant people. Hormonal changes mean that the barrier between your oesophagus and stomach is softer than usual, so stomach acid can encroach back up and cause heartburn. This softening also means that your digestion is slower than usual, so food takes longer to get through your stomach and into your bowels. As pregnancy progresses, your growing uterus means there is simply less space for your stomach and the acid is 'squeezed' back up.

Unfortunately it isn't usually possible to prevent heartburn completely, but there are a number of things you can try to minimise the discomfort:

- Avoid consuming anything which makes it worse, common ones are: caffeinated and fizzy drinks, food that is rich or spicy, or with high levels of fat
- Eat little and often, rather than having large meals
- Have good posture whilst eating, ideally sat up at a table rather than sitting on a deep sofa
- Don't smoke or drink alcohol



- Finish eating at least two hours before going to bed, to allow your body time to digest the food
- Sleep with an extra pillow or two. In extreme situations you may want to prop yourself upright to sleep
- Speak to your GP or midwife if your heartburn is still getting worse despite trying these things as there are medications that can help