

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Heartburn:

Heartburn can occur for many reasons, including overeating, eating certain foods, taking medicines or as a result of surgery.

Solutions:

Avoid foods that have caused heartburn before. Some foods commonly associated with heartburn are highly seasoned foods, greasy or fried foods, chocolate, alcohol and beverages that contain caffeine (coffee, tea and soft drinks).

Eat five or six smaller meals a day instead of three large meals. Decreasing the amount of food in your stomach eases digestion and reduces the chances of heartburn.

Remain standing or sitting for at least two hours after eating. If you lie down, keep your upper body raised at a 45-degree angle.

Eat your last meal several hours before going to bed.

Take an antacid one hour after meals to relieve heartburn. You can also try taking antacids before going to bed. If you take antacids frequently, tell your doctor or dietitian.

Changes in how food tastes:

How food tastes often determines what you like to eat. If food begins to taste different — if it becomes too sweet, too bland, bitter or metallic-tasting — your appetite can be affected. Medicines often cause these taste changes.

Solutions:

Brush your teeth after meals and snacks. Good oral hygiene helps control bad taste. Ask your doctor or dietitian if using a mouthwash would help.

Cold or room-temperature food might taste better.

Eat alternatives to red meat. Try turkey, chicken, fish, eggs or dairy products such as yogurt, cheese or cottage cheese.

Use marinades to add flavor to poultry, red meat or fish. Fruit juice, teriyaki sauce, Italian dressing, beer or wine will also add flavor.

Add spices, such as herbs, onions, bacon bits or almonds to flavor plain foods.

Use strong seasonings to improve the flavor of meats and vegetables. Rosemary, oregano, basil, tarragon or mint are good options.

Eat snacks that leave a refreshing, pleasing aftertaste: fresh fruit, chewing gum, hard candy or cinnamon, or mint-flavored foods or beverages.

Sore mouth or throat:

A sore mouth or throat can make eating difficult. Medicines or mouth infections can cause soreness.

Solutions:

Eat bland, mild-flavored foods. Spicy or salty foods can irritate soreness.

Eat lukewarm or cold foods. Hot food can irritate soreness.

Puree foods before you eat them. Most cooked foods can be pureed in a blender or food processor.

Avoid carbonated beverages or drink them only after they have gone flat. Carbonation can irritate soreness.

Drink soups or other liquids from a straw or a cup instead of a spoon to keep foods away from sore spots in your mouth.

Talk with your provider about using an anesthetic mouthwash to help relieve discomfort.

Have your provider examine your mouth to see whether you have a fungal infection. Such infections are treatable and often occur in people who are ill, especially those taking steroids or antibiotics.

Avoid rough foods that might be hard to swallow, such as hard breads, toast, popcorn, raw vegetables, nuts and seeds.

Eat soft foods that are easy to chew. Try casseroles, meat with gravy, mashed potatoes, cooked cereal, ice cream, eggs, pudding or cottage cheese.

Eat foods that are less acidic. Try bananas, canned pears and peaches, applesauce or fruit nectars. Avoid tomatoes, oranges, grapefruits and pineapples.

