

Top 5 Herbal Remedies for Heartburn



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Heartburn and Herbal Remedies

We often receive a lot of questions about how to treat heartburn around this time of giving thanks and sometimes overindulging! We have an article on our blog GetPharmacyAdvice.com about [Natural Remedies for Heartburn](#) . That article reviews how to avoid and naturally treat occasional heartburn.

Here we are focusing on the top 5 herbal remedies that you can use to alleviate your discomfort right now!

First, a little about heartburn -what is it? It is a pain in the esophagus (food pipe) that is caused by stomach acid. There is a muscle between the stomach and esophagus, the lower esophageal sphincter (LES). The LES is meant to open and allow food into the stomach. Sometimes the LES can temporarily loosen and allow some food and stomach acid to escape into the esophagus causing symptoms of heartburn. Many people suffer from heartburn occasionally from “over-indulging” (like on Thanksgiving☺). If you have recurrent heartburn it is best to talk with your healthcare provider.

Herbal remedies have been used since ancient times. Hippocrates said, “Let food be thy medicine and medicine be thy food.” Oftentimes, in our “Western-medicine” world, herbal remedies are overlooked. We think this is because many herbal remedies have anecdotal evidence but no hard scientific fact. Why are there not more scientific studies about herbs? Mostly because there is not much money in these remedies, so drug companies don’t want to invest their money into the research. How would drug companies make money on something you can grow in your backyard?

Herbal remedies are not regulated by the FDA. This means that herbs do not need to actually contain the amount of herb that the label on the bottle states. This is why it is important to find a trustworthy brand AND use herbs in their whole form (ie fresh ginger root versus ginger capsules) as often as possible.

Herbal remedies can have side effects and interact with your other medications. You should check with your physician or pharmacist before adding on any herbal remedies.

GINGER



How does ginger help? Ginger helps protect the stomach by blocking acid and suppress H.Pylori. H.Pylori is the bacteria that can cause acid reflux (not everyone with acid reflux/heartburn has H.Pylori).

How to take ginger? It is best to use fresh ginger root (found easily at the grocery store in the produce section). Add two slices of ginger to a large mug of hot water. Let steep for 20-30 minutes and drink 20 minutes before your meal. If the tea is too gingery for you, add 1 tsp of local, unpasteurized honey (which will help prevent heartburn too!)

FENNEL



How does fennel help? Fennel helps by soothing the digestive tract, reducing stomach acid and stimulating digestion.

How to take fennel? For heartburn, it is best to take 1/2 -1 tsp of fennel seeds and chew them slowly after eating your meal. You can also make a tea by putting 2 tsp of fennel seeds in a large mug of hot water. Allow to steep for 10 minutes.

SLIPPERY ELM



How does slippery elm help? Slippery Elm coats and soothes the esophagus and stomach. It also works to decrease inflammation and increases mucus secretion to protect the lining of your stomach and intestines.

How to take slippery elm? Slippery Elm can be found at natural grocery stores and most pharmacies. It often comes in capsules, which you can take 400mg every 6 hours as needed. It also is available in powder form. A tea can be made with 2 tablespoons of powder and 2 cups of boiling water. Allow to steep for 5 minutes then drink up to three times a day (as needed).

TURMERIC



How does turmeric help? Turmeric helps decrease inflammation, relieve pain and stimulate digestion. The active ingredient in turmeric is curcumin.

How to take turmeric? Fresh turmeric root can be found in most grocery stores. It is usually near the fresh ginger. It is also available as a powder in the spice section. Add ½ -1 tsp fresh or powdered turmeric to 2 cups of boiling water. Allow to steep about 20 minutes.

BASIL



How does basil help? Basil decreases stomach acid, stimulates digestion and increases mucus production to help protect the stomach and intestines from too much acid.

How to take basil? The easiest way is to chew the fresh basil leaves. It can help prevent heartburn if you chew before a meal. Chewing after a meal will help soothe heartburn symptoms. Chew 3-5 basil leaves. Or you can make a tea (of course!) Add 3-5 basil leaves to 1 cup of boiling water and steep for 15 minutes.

****BONUS****

Apple Cider Vinegar: Add 1 tablespoon of raw, unfiltered ACV to a large glass of water and drink!

Aloe Juice: Drink 1/2 cup of aloe vera juice 20 minutes before eating. Take care because aloe juice can have a laxative effect. Some brands have removed this component.

Baking Soda: If you are desperate for immediate pain relief, mix 1/2 to 1 teaspoon of baking soda (sodium bicarbonate) in 8 oz. of water. This works similarly to OTC antacids.

Honey: Add 1/2- 1 tsp of raw, unpasteurized honey to any of the herbal teas.

Loosen Up: Unbutton your pants, change into sweats –loosen your clothes to decrease pressure on your stomach and intestines!

Movement: And fresh air! Go for a slow, relaxing walk outside and take deep breaths! This is much more helpful for your body than lying down.

Stretching: Energetically speaking, this energy needs space to flow. It is helpful to do some really light stretching. Stand and reach one hand toward the sky –stretching your side, repeat with the other hand. Then put both hands on your stomach and with light pressure pull them away from each other (like you are lightly scratching your belly).

Author Information

Cate and Nova met in pharmacy school at Northeastern in Boston, MA. They were quick friends that found they shared an interest in connecting with patients. They have experience in a variety of pharmacy fields, including retail, hospital, home infusion and ambulatory. In 2009, they started a blog [Get Pharmacy Advice](#) that allowed them a new fun way to interact and educate!

Both Cate and Nova also have a true interest in natural medicine. They desire to share information on a combination of western pharmaceuticals, natural and home remedies and energy medicine.

They welcome you to come visit them at their blog [Get Pharmacy Advice](#) –read, learn, interact, question and contribute!

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