

Kick Heartburn Out Of Your Exercise Routine

(NAPSA)—Exercise may keep you healthy and strong, but most people don't know that it can also cause heartburn. The good news is that exercise-induced heartburn can be controlled for heartburn sufferers to help them continue an active lifestyle.

The Link Between Exercise and Heartburn

Researchers believe that certain exercises may increase abdominal pressure and push stomach acid into the esophagus, contributing to heartburn symptoms. Below are some tips from the National Heartburn Alliance to avoid heartburn during exercise:

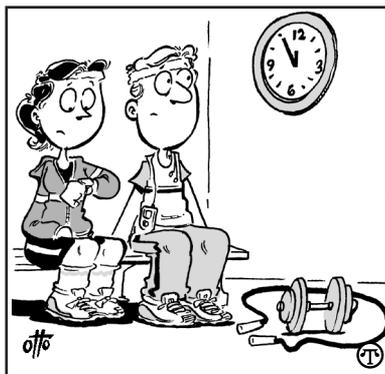
- **Avoid vigorous exercises.** A bouncing type of exercise, such as jogging, can increase your chances of suffering from acid reflux.

- **Pass up protein and fatty snacks.** Food that is consumed less than two hours before exercising makes a huge impact on the occurrence of heartburn. Pre-workout meals should be high in carbohydrates and low in fat and protein.

- **Limit types of foods.** Certain foods and beverages are more likely to cause heartburn than others. Moderate your intake of citrus fruits and juices, chocolate, onions, peppermint, spearmint, fatty or spicy foods and caffeinated or carbonated beverages.

- **Time your meals.** Exercising on a full stomach is not advisable, largely because it increases intra-abdominal pressure, which may contribute to heartburn. Wait at least two hours after a meal before exercising.

- **Control quantity.** Decrease portion sizes when eating prior to exercise. Reflux is more likely to occur when there is a lot of food in the stomach.



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- **Drink plenty of water before and during exercise.** Water aids in digestion and also prevents dehydration.

- **Talk to your health care professional.** Confirm what types of exercises cause the least amount of discomfort for you and what you can do to ease the heartburn if it reoccurs. Your doctor can advise you and help you understand differences between available treatment options.

- **Use the appropriate medication to help avoid future heartburn.** In addition to speaking to your doctor, choosing the correct heartburn medication is an important step in preventing exercise-induced heartburn. Treatment options are available, including antacids (e.g., Tums®), H2 blockers (e.g., Zantac®) and proton pump inhibitors (e.g., Prilosec OTC®). Speak to your doctor about which is best for you.

“With the proper treatment, active individuals can continue their regular exercise regimen without worrying about the return of heartburn,” says Dr. Janet Engle, a Clinical Professor at the College of Pharmacy at the University of Illinois at Chicago. “If

heartburn induced by exercise continues to be a problem, you should talk to your doctor about the treatment option that is best for you.”

The Many Faces of Heartburn

For the more than 60 million people who suffer from heartburn each month in the U.S., understanding and finding treatment options can be difficult. The key to treating exercise-induced heartburn is to understand what type you have.

Heartburn is a condition caused by stomach acid flowing up into the esophagus; however, contrary to popular belief, there are different types of heartburn:

- **Episodic** or occasional heartburn is characterized by infrequent bouts of heartburn that are usually manageable or predictable in the short term.

- **Frequent** heartburn (FHB) occurs two or more days per week. Frequent heartburn sufferers may also be those who medicate heartburn symptoms more than two days per week. People with FHB might also find themselves using multiple over-the-counter (OTC) medications more than two days a week for relief.

- **Severe** or chronic heartburn occurs more than two days per week and persists while taking appropriate medications, despite dietary and lifestyle changes. Sufferers with severe heartburn should speak to a health care professional.

“Understanding these various types of heartburn is key to knowing how to choose the most appropriate medicine,” says Dr. Engle. “Just as not all heartburn is the same, not all medicine is the same.”

For more information on heartburn and how to treat it, visit the National Heartburn Alliance at www.heartburnalliance.org.