

Heartburn: Put Out the Fire

Antacids may not be the answer.

There are many different causes for heartburn and indigestion, which include hiatal hernia, gastroesophageal (GE) reflux, gastritis, ulcer disease, gallbladder disease, excessive acid production, low acid production, pancreatic insufficiency and food allergy. But I believe one of the most common causes of heartburn and indigestion is hypochlorhydria, which is decreased gastric acid secretion or, more simply put, not enough hydrochloric acid.

Approximately 50 percent of people over the age of 50 have low stomach acidity. The stressful lifestyles of most Americans account for much of this. Carrying too heavy a stress load is like running your car engine past the red line, or leaving your toaster stuck in the “on” position, or running a nuclear reactor past maximum permissible power. Sooner or later something will break, burn up or melt down.

The sad thing is that most of us are treating this with antacids. Actually, these compound the problem by lowering the acid even more rather than helping a person.

Of course, there is a cure for the problems caused by a sympathetic dominant, type-A personality. It's the Bible cure, and it's called the sabbath. Once a week, our bodies need a chance to rest. This spiritual law has tremendous physical benefits, allowing our bodies to rest, refresh and renew. There are also steps that we can take throughout the day in order to give our bodies some mini-sabbaths:

Relaxation exercise

Lie down in a comfortable setting with soothing praise and worship music; beginning with the toes, flex for just a second

or two, then relax.

Go through every muscle group flexing and then relaxing, all the way through your face muscles. This will put the body in a very relaxed state.

Deep breathing

Practice deep breathing by simply lying down with a book on the abdomen, taking a deep breath in and watching the book rise in the air. Then exhale. Do this five to 10 times. Practice abdominal breathing rather than chest breathing in order to relax.

A brisk walk

This seems to relax many people. Also you can meditate on the Word of God or read Scripture aloud to help you relax. By being in a relaxed state you will avoid the “fight-or-flight” sympathetic response, which interferes with digestion.

Drink water

Drink one to two glasses of filtered or distilled water 30 minutes prior to each meal. We have a mucous layer that covers the lining of the stomach. The mucous layer is to prevent the hydrochloric acid from burning the stomach. We would self-digest our own stomachs if it were not for the mucous layer.

Ask God today to guide you in finding new ways to rest and relax.

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