Management of Acid Reflux, Oesophagitis, Heartburn & Hiatus Hernia

**Acid Reflux** occurs when the digestive juices rise into the oesophagus (gullet) from the stomach.

**Heartburn** is a burning discomfort felt behind the breastbone, often rising from the stomach to the throat. When this happens a lot, the oesophagus becomes inflamed, this is called **oesophagitis**.

A **hiatus hernia** occurs when part of the stomach rises through the hole (hiatus) in the diaphragm through which the oesophagus (gullet) passes.

Sometimes altering how and what you eat can help.

**Try to:**

- Eat small frequent meals. Do not miss meals or go for long periods without food
- Eat slowly and chew your food well
- Sit at the table when eating
- Have a varied food intake. If a particular food upsets you, avoid it until you feel better
- Lose weight if you are overweight. Ask your Doctor or Practice Nurse for advice
- Avoid eating or drinking late at night

**Try to avoid:**

- Large meals
- Eating quickly
- Eating late at night
- Eating foods of extreme temperature, hot or cold
- Foods that are spicy, acidic or difficult to digest
- Eating foods which you know cause you symptoms
Foods most commonly linked with acid reflux and heartburn include:

- Fried foods
- Shellfish, kippers, salted fish
- Highly seasoned and spicy dishes eg, Chilli con Carne, curry, soups - mulligatawny, oxtail
- Raw vegetables - especially celery, radishes, cucumber, onions, peppers eg, in coleslaw
- Pickles, vinegar, mustard, pepper, spices.
- Skins, pips and seeds of fruit eg, skin of apple/pear, pips of oranges, seeds of strawberries. Avoid jams and marmalades with pips, skins and seeds - select the jelly variety instead.
- Dried fruit and nuts
- Strong cheese, cooked “stringy” cheese.
- Strong tea or coffee - especially “stewed” varieties.
- Tough or twice cooked meat, eg, Sunday roast again on Monday.
- Chocolate
- Alcohol

**General Hints**

1. Maintain a good posture - stand upright and bend correctly.

2. Sleep with extra pillows. Prop up the bed by approximately 4 inches e.g. place a house brick under each leg at the pillow end of the bed.

3. Take all medicines regularly as prescribed by the doctor. Some medicines need to be taken regularly not just when you have symptoms.

4. Avoid smoking, especially on an empty stomach.

5. Avoid stooping, bending from the waist or lying down after eating.

6. Avoid tight fitting underwear, skirts or trousers.